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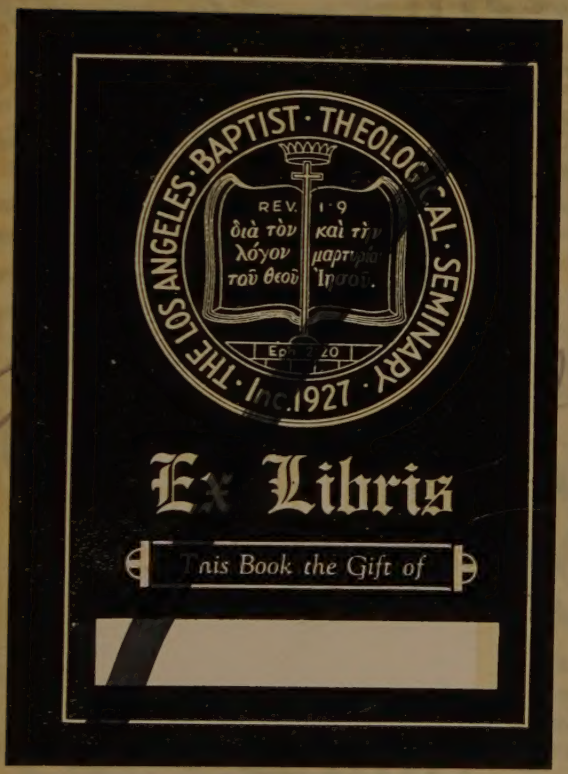
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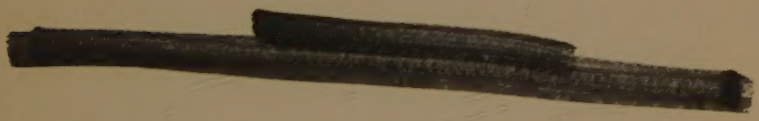

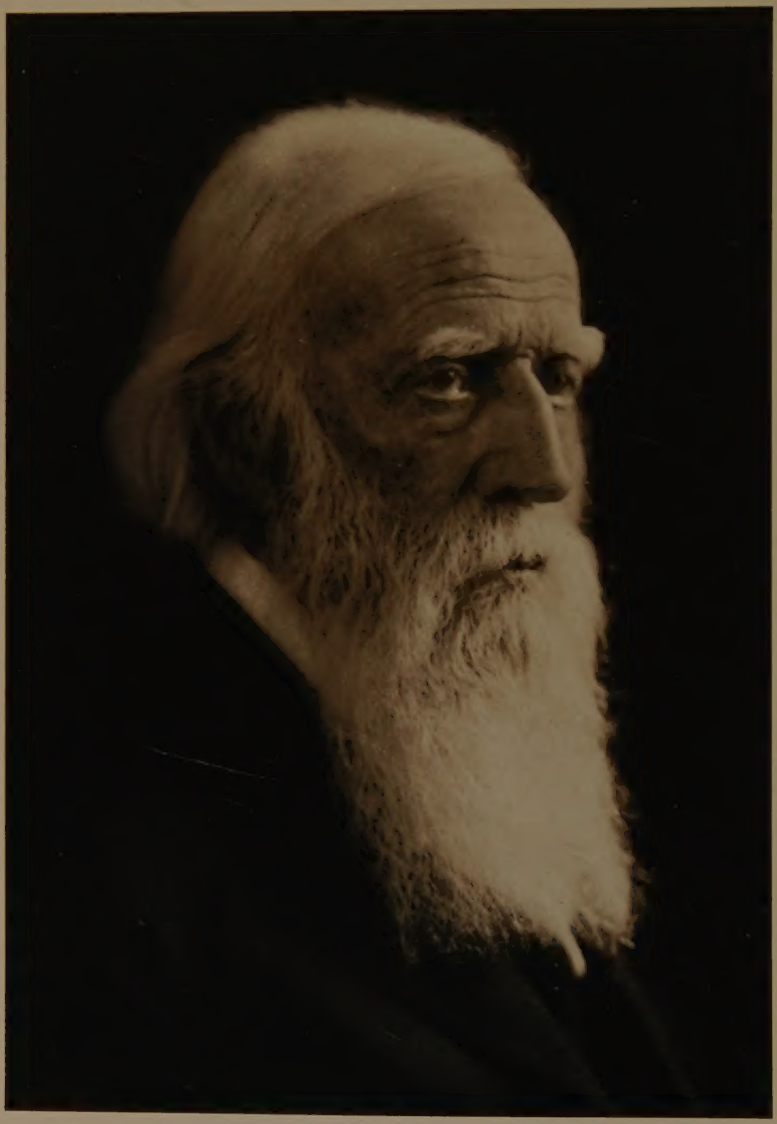

J. P. WIDNEY
90 Years

# THE FAITH THAT HAS COME TO ME

*By* J. P. WIDNEY

*Author of*

Race Life of the Aryan Peoples
The Genesis and Evolution of Islam and Judaeo-Christianity
Ahasuerus—A Race Tragedy
The Lure and the Land

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J. P. WIDNEY
Los Angeles, California
1932

To my wife,
MARY,
who for fifty years, in body
or in Spirit, has been
ever with me.

*Religion is not a System of Theology: it is a Life.*
*Creeds are many:*
*Religion is One.*
*And religion should not divide the World:*
*It should unify the World.*
*One God. One Faith. One Humanity.*
*We be Brethren.*

J. P. WIDNEY
BETH-EL TERRACE
LOS ANGELES
1930

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# I

## INTROSPECTION

THIS book is a soul-history. And it is the history of my own soul. One speaks best of the things which pertain to his personal experience. Yet we often shrink from laying bare our own soul-life. It may be diffidence. It may be fear of criticism. It may be fear of ecclesiastical ostracism. It may be dread lest we become a stumbling-block to others. This dread comes especially to one who stands as a public teacher of divine truth: and, it might be, some lingering dread of divine displeasure, springing from the mental habit of the old childhood teachings, though outlived and put aside. Yet does God want a soul to be dishonest with itself, or with Him?

There is, however, another side to the question. Have we a moral right not to speak when strong convictions of the truth come to us? And in the fear lest we become a stumbling-block to others, may we not, perchance, fail of a helping hand to some other struggling soul? Or may we not fail of bearing our part in the burden, in the odium even, of that questioning of the old and accepted which lies back of all quests after truth, and back of all great spiritual readjustments? Sometimes when I have spoken of my own change in beliefs, others have come to me with earnest, hungry eyes, saying, "I am glad for your words. I, too, could not honestly hold to the old. I was drifting. Your

words have steadied my faith in God, and have brought peace and rest to me." Dare I not speak?

And again: Has one a moral right to shield himself behind a majority and keep silent in his opinions? Such a course would have stifled Christianity in its very inception. Paul evidently did not so shield himself when, in the face of a hostile Judæism and a heathen world, he cried out: "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel!"

Another word: This book has not been written hastily. It is the growth of time: for I have lived it. Much of it has lain, with other manuscript, in my safe for years. I wished time to examine and to re-examine: to verify each word: to weigh every proposition: to test by my own soul experience. I am no longer young. Possibly ninety years are somewhat in a soul-life. I realize that as a teacher of what I believe to be divine truth, I must answer to God for my words. And the conviction grows upon me that I have no right to withhold the faith that has come to me. And it is faith, deep, strong, abiding faith; not doubt. I am not presumptuously self-confident. The message may fall upon unheeding ears. And it may be that the world, this great, busy, struggling world, will not care. But if some troubled, doubting soul shall be helped thereby into a clearer light, I shall die with a glad heart, and in deeper peace.

### *"Quid Est Veritas?"*

When Pilate, that day, asked the question: "What is truth?" he voiced the hungry cry of the human heart of all ages. He might personally have lacked the moral courage to follow the truth; yet the voicing was there:

and somehow we must believe that back of the moral cowardice was yet a heart of unrest which had had a glimpse of a life better, and stronger, than its own. *Quid est veritas?* The cry is the birth-pang of light in the soul of man. It is the hungry cry—Oh, the pity of it!—that went up for ages from the cross, the arena, the scaffold, the stake and the fagots; from the noisome dungeon; from hunted outcasts in lone caves of the mountains; and which still goes up from the ostracism of time-worn creeds; for the world has never been tolerant of those who have not thought in the worn lines of approved ecclesiastical beliefs.

"What is truth?" The cry is the unsatisfied striving of the human soul to be honest with itself, and with God! And shall it not cry out? And will not God hear and answer the cry of the soul which He has created, and which cannot accept the ready-made beliefs that have failed to satisfy the soul-hunger—the soul that seeks God afresh, and for itself? And would God be just if He did not hear and answer the cry?

And in it all the scoffer has neither lot nor part. The man who approaches the investigation of God's laws in a spirit of scoffing has failed before he begins: for he has failed to grasp the greatness of the problem. God is there: and His truth abides.

In a revival service I spoke to a stranger, asking whether it was well between his soul and God. He replied, with a sneer, that he did not believe in a God. I did not argue with him. I simply made answer, "Good-bye, Brother! We shall not meet again. I am not going that way."

## The Scoffer

The scoffer made acclaim,
"Why should I fear the gods?
Am I not strong as they?
And are there any gods?"

And the gods made no reply.
And the ages come and go:
And the winds blow over the plain:
And the river runs by the hill:
And the mountains lift their heads:
And the stars unmoved go on:
And still the gods are there.

And the scoffer?—Men forgot:
And the grave had never a stone.

# II

## SOUNDINGS

BELIEF, to be real, must be based upon reason. A so-called belief, which is not thus based upon reason, cannot be considered real in the true sense of the word: for the mind either fails to grasp, or in reality rejects, that which the lips had professed.

. . . . . .

It is a matter of common complaint that, after nineteen centuries, Christianity is losing its hold upon the masses: and that the thinking portion of the world is no longer to be found within Church lines. That there is a measure of truth in the statement can hardly be doubted. But the question naturally arises—Is it Christianity that has lost its power: or is it somewhat which we have called Christianity? There is a distinction to be made here: for that, during all the long centuries, much of tradition, much of inference, much of theological guesswork, much of meaningless ritual, even, have been allowed to accumulate around those original center-points—The Law, and the Life and Words of Jesus—is manifest upon even a cursory examination.

And the further question arises—Is this modified and evoluted faith which has been presented to the world as Christianity—is it in all respects a reasonable faith, or is it, on the contrary, a faith which the world

has outgrown, and to which it cannot go back? And a question still further arises—Is the faith which has been thus built up one which is, in all respects, justified by the original foundations, or is it one which has insufficient foundation in the original scheme?

And these are fair and legitimate questions. Will the answer throw any light upon that other question of the drifting away of the world's mental life from the churches of today? We know that the past, also, had its seasons of drifting away from Christianity as presented to it at various eras, and from like causes. The drift has manifestly not ceased. And it means that the thinking world has again weighed Christianity as it is presented, and again is not satisfied. Does the Church gain anything by ignoring the fact? And does the cause of true religion gain anything? Is it not wiser to go back, and again examine the foundations, and see how far they justify the conclusions which have been drawn; and then apply the measuring rod and the plummet to the superstructure as framed in the various creeds of today? And in examining the foundations, the Written Word itself must be tested and tried strictly according to the same rules of testimony as those which govern in a court of law, neither more nor less. To depart from this safe rule of procedure is to open up a limitless range for possible error, and to cast a cloud of uncertainty and of doubt over the result: for, granted the premises, and anything may be proved! Nor does this careful re-examination of the foundations and the superstructure of Christianity carry with it any just impli-

cation of irreligion, or of lack of reverence for divine things. It is simply the legitimate, and proper, use of the reasoning faculties with which God has endued man: and the fact of the enduement carries with it just warrant, and indeed duty, for their use. And further, such investigation is not only warranted, but is necessitated: for in no other way is it possible to segregate spiritual truth from error which may have gathered about it.

And thus to go back and re-examine the foundations, and re-test the superstructure of our faith, is no new thing in the history of Christianity. It is a spiritual right which has been exercised by the Church, in council assembled, again and again, throughout all ages since the first General Council which was convened for that purpose at Nikaia, A.D. 325: and, indeed, at the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, also, nearly three centuries before, which was presided over by James, the brother of Jesus. And these formal church councils have only been the public exponents and mouthpieces for the individual and private discussions and dissensions which have in each case preceded them.

### *A Personal Word*

And now a personal word. This book is written in no spirit of controversy; neither in any spirit of irreverence; but carefully, prayerfully, and with only one desire—to know the Truth. The highest spiritual duty of every man, I take it, is to be honest with his own soul, and with God. As the consciousness of this truth grew

upon me through the years, the question kept recurring to me with an insistence which would not be ignored, or put aside—How much of what I have professed to believe has simply been assented to as a matter of form, and of early training: and how much has really been a matter of actual, intelligent belief? In other words, of my professed creed, how much have I really believed: how much have I only said, or thought, I believed? With the awakening of this self-consciousness, I found within myself a growing disinclination in my public ministry to preach along certain lines of so-called Christian doctrine. The question would constantly force itself upon me—Do I really believe this myself? And at most I could only reply to my own question: Upon some points I neither believe nor disbelieve; the evidence does not seem to be conclusive; I can only hold to that old Scottish verdict, "Not proven."

Then, for the sake of my own soul-belief, as well as because of the responsibility of my public ministry, I began a work of careful research which has continued through years. And in this I have not simply taken the King James version of the Scriptures, but have gone back to the originals, carefully testing the words as to primary, and secondary, meanings; and the texts as to context, and as to parallel passages; and measuring and weighing the results by the manifest purpose of the divine message to man, and by their consistency or inconsistency with the divine character of God. In this investigation the following rules have seemed to me to be only just and fair:

*Rules of Procedure*

I. That only the direct words of the divine message, taken at first hand, should be held as authoritative, as of Jehovah in the Old Covenant Record, and of Jesus in the New, as all else is necessarily only hearsay or inference. Especially does this hold true with regard to the being, the nature, and the relationships of him whom we call Jesus of Nazareth.

II. In all cases the simple, direct, primary meaning of the words and statements is to be taken, unless there is clear, positive evidence that a secondary and inferential meaning is intended. And in this the burden of proof rests with those who would claim the secondary rather than the primary meaning.

III. A secondary, or inferential, meaning cannot in reason be allowed to controvert even one clear, direct statement of the authority quoted. One "Yes," or "No," one direct affirmation or denial from the principal, outweighs, and is conclusive against, any number of inferential suppositions of a contrary nature which might be drawn from his words elsewhere.

IV. Words must not be juggled with so that in one place in a discourse they bear one shade of meaning, while in another place they bear a different shade. The failure to observe this commonsense rule lies back of much of the confusion and misunderstanding of theological discussions. Especially is this true in what are ordinarily termed Holiness Teachings. In all cases the dictionary must be the standard and arbiter.

The foregoing are the simple, just, commonsense rules which decide upon the value of evidence in a court of law, and which have been found absolutely essential in a legal search for truth; and there is no adequate reason for departing from them in the court of theological adjudication. While the spiritual world is less open to our investigations than the material world, we have yet no reason, or authority, to set up a different code of proofs for it, or to vary from the standard of tests which we find necessary and efficient in material things. Any departure from this simple, just rule of procedure would at once invalidate the results which might be claimed in the investigation. And it is also to be borne in mind that in our earthly lives there is a limit to the knowable; and the limitation is because of a lack of established facts upon which to base our reasoning. It is that old problem again of the quadratic equation which *must* have three known quantities from which to reason, or the finding of the fourth is impossible.

. . . . . .

Yet, standing between two eternities, there are some things which the soul of man must know. It cannot rest. It cries out in its sore unrest. And ever the cry: for eternity will not wait:

## Whither Away?

I stand on a narrow threshold
    Within the shadows dim
Of drifting years that onward roll
    To the ages, dark and grim.

And at evening, and at morning,
    In the midnight, and at dawn,
I stand and hark at the stern, sure feet
    Of the ages marching on.

Unhasting, and unresting,
    They make no check, nor stay:
But on, and on, in the dim unknown
    They wend their solemn way.

And little to me the shadows;
    And little the eve or dawn,
As I stand and feel the measured beat
    Of the ages marching on.

# III

## AUTHORITIES

IN ALL theological and religious investigations and discussions the question at once arises—What are the authorities upon which such investigation or discussion is based? The question is just and fair. It is the question at once asked in all other lines of human research: and religion has no recognizable right to claim an exception. And careful and critical examination into the reliability or sufficiency of these sources upon which a religion makes claim to be based is not only legitimate and fair, but is absolutely essential before the creeds or beliefs purporting to be based thereon are entitled to credence. It is simply applying to religion the same tests for credibility which are deemed indispensable in all other departments of human inquiry. Without this testing, religion sinks to the lower level of mere superstition, and can have no legitimate claim to recognition by a thinking mind. The mere claim to inspiration proves nothing, and, unsupported, cannot be conceded. It is claimed by many religions. The Mohammedan claims inspiration for the Koran. The Latter-day Saints claim inspiration for the Book of Mormon, and the subsequent revelations. The Christian Scientist claims a measure of inspiration for the books of Mrs. Eddy. And they each have the

same logical right to assert their claim to divine inspiration as has Judæo-Christianity for the Bible.

We must, then, have some test if we are to decide as to what is, and what is not, divine Truth. Is it miracle? The Mohammedan has his list of these. Is it healing? Almost every religion has its thousands of cases, and all equally well authenticated, and not to be questioned. The Saints' shrines of Romanism, the Holy Places of Islam, the long lists of Christian Science—they are everywhere, and equally substantiated. They, too, have their stacks of discarded crutches. If we admit healing as proof, we cannot concede to one and deny to another. We are logically forced to admit the miracle of whatever type as equally proof for all, or else deny it to all. There must, therefore, be some other test, or there is no test.

If the miracle, then, in all its forms, be discarded as proof—and at best the miracle, if established, is not logical proof of anything but the possession of some occult power by the worker—there is only left, as a possible test for the claim to divine inspiration in a teaching, the one criterion—inherent probability or improbability in the teaching itself. The human mind is thus forced to become its own umpire in reaching a decision, for no man has seen God to ask Him. Nor does this course indicate irreverence or mistrust toward God. On the contrary, it is doubly honoring Him; for it is not only making use of the reasoning faculties with which He has endowed man, His creature, but also it is making certain that the divine message to man's soul is not counterfeited, or distorted, or misrepresented.

The sources of information as ordinarily recognized in Judæo-Christianity are as follows:

I. The Scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments, commonly known as The Bible.

II. Tradition.

III. The Writings of the Fathers: meaning, by these, the writings of certain groups of men, ordinarily ecclesiastics, who gathered about later Judæism and early Christianity as commentators and expositors of the Judæo-Christian teachings.

IV. That spiritual illumination which is possessed to a greater or less degree by every human soul, and which is recognized as inborn and inherent.

Of these sources, one, namely tradition, while accorded much weight by certain branches of the Christian Church, has been largely discarded by others upon the ground that it is not original evidence, but only hearsay, and private opinion, passed on and down through the centuries, and with no possibility of assurance either as to original truthfulness or unchanged transmission. In this investigation traditions are, therefore, set aside as incompetent testimony. The justness of this course will become more apparent as the discussion proceeds. Let us consider the three others:

### *The Scriptures—What are They?*

Collectively, they are known as The Bible—["Τα Βιβλια," "The Books"]: for the name, which comes from the Greek, is in the plural, and what we speak of collectively as The Bible, is in reality a library,

made up of many and diverse books. And it does not in itself claim to be collectively a direct revelation from God, finished, complete; but, instead, it is a growth and a selection. And the growth was slow, running through centuries. In this respect it follows the general law of development of other Bibles of the world: for each religion has its own canon of spiritual teachings, and they, too, have generally been the product of slow growth and selection. The Old Testament portion of the Bible is largely the literature of the early Hebrew race, the slow evolution, in its various authorships, of possibly a thousand years. It contains myths, traditions, history, laws, biography, tragedies, love idyls, devotional hymns, prophecies, rituals, hygienics, eugenics, business maxims, moralities—all the varied products of a slowly developing race-life. But the one great central feature, that which forms the nucleus about which all the remainder has gathered, is —The Law. And the spot about which it all clusters is Sinai. These Old Testament books contain the Hebrew ideas about God, sin, repentance, forgiveness; but apparently only a vague and uncertain hinting of a Hereafter for man: for the veil is never wholly drawn aside.

Yet the Old Testament books are in themselves only a survival and a selection. A *survival*—for the portion of Genesis which precedes the call of Abram seems to have been only a part of the common mythical lore of that ancient world in the Far East before the Jews became segregated as a separate people. A *selection*—for they represent only a part of the sacred or semi-sacred writings of the Hebrew race. In the course of

centuries the books which constitute the canon of the Old Testament seem to have been picked out from the great mass of the sacred writings of the race by common consent, and held apart as most representative of the religious views and life of the Hebrew people. But then, there are others that have been lost. Mention is made by both Old and New Testament writers of books, and quotations made from them as sacred authorities, which to us are now unknown. And of the books recognized as canonical, and of authority, by the Jews, Protestant Christianity has rejected a portion. The Roman church, however, recognizes and receives, as valid portions of the Scriptures, books rejected by Protestantism, giving them place side-by-side with the other books, and charging Protestantism with possessing only a defective and incomplete Bible. This was the larger Bible that Jesus knew: and it is of that old Hebrew canon that he speaks when he makes mention of, and quotes from, "The Scriptures," for the New Testament record had not then been lived and written.

The same process has been gone through with in the formation of the canon of the New Testament Scriptures. The Christians of the generation with Jesus, and for many years after, knew no Scriptures save the Old Testament books. These to them were the Bible, and all of the Bible. But when Jesus was no longer upon earth, and his voice of teaching hushed, and as his words began to grow dim in the minds of a new generation, and questions and disputes as to his exact sayings arose, men took up the work of committing to writing, in more or less systematic form, what they could remem-

ber: for Jesus himself left no written record. It is in allusion to this growing uncertainty, and in recognition also of the necessity for some more definite and sure authority, that Luke writes as introduction to his Gospel: "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word; so it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." *Luke I:1, 4.*

The record of the life and teachings of Jesus is contained in the Four Gospels. It might be more accurate to say, such record as we have: for the record as given is very meager; strangely so, even painfully so for the importance of the questions to which it has given rise, and the weight which has been accorded to it. And these Four Gospels are all of the record: for all that follows in what we collectively call the New Testament, is only hearsay, or inference, or comment, or theological speculation: as much so as the writings of the Church Fathers, Ante- or Post-Nikaine. The meagerness and incompleteness of the record is incidentally alluded to in the closing of the Gospel by John, where, with a touch of Oriental exaggeration, the writer says: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." *John XXI:25.*

Of the Four Gospels, two, Matthew and John, were supposedly written by members of the little band of the Twelve Disciples who were his followers and personal attendants: supposedly, for they are unsigned, and only early tradition connects the names of these two disciples with the authorship. Of the two other Gospels, Mark is supposed to have been written by one who was not of the Twelve: Luke, admittedly, by one who was not of the personal following of Jesus. These Four Gospels already bore evidence of the work of time in blurring, and obscuring, and warping, human tradition: for that they were not written until many years after the death of Jesus, is generally conceded. As instances of this may be cited the varying and conflicting accounts of the birth and infancy of Jesus, and of the incidents of the resurrection. They also show how different minds vary in their apprehension and recollection of the words of teaching. The light which they throw upon the life and words of Jesus is in some respects the more valuable because of this fact: but, that time has been doing its work in the recollection of scenes, of words, and of events, is manifest upon comparison of the four narratives. And these Gospels also show the difference, and it is a marked difference, in the mental attitude of the narrators.

With Mark, it is the plain, blunt tale of events, uncolored, unvarnished, unelaborated, and with apparently little curiosity as to antecedents, or consequences. Matthew is somewhat of the same type, only more copious and inquiring. Yet to Matthew has come the thought of linking present and past through the genea-

logical table. He discerns, apparently, the value to the new teachings that a theological pedigree may afford. It is the Jew holding to the past, that speaks. Luke shows the skilled, trained man of the world, who realizes the full value of a personal history, complete in all of its details. And his Gospel bears evidence of the working of a mind that has a preconceived purpose already formed. It is not, as Matthew and Mark, mere narrative: it has a theory to uphold. This is shown not only in the elaborate genealogical table, but also in the carefully detailed account of the pre-natal events of the Jesus narrative. There is a manifest purpose here shown to link together in logical and historical sequence the old and the new of two religious dramas, Hebræism and Christianity. This fact makes his Gospel the most elaborate, but at the same time the least weighty, of all; for it betrays in the mind of the narrator a pre-existing theory and purpose, toward the establishment of which his narrative is steadily working. The same persisting continuity of purpose is shown in the narrational and sequential linking together of his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, as given in the first chapter of Acts. John, the gentle-hearted mystic, is already foreshadowing that unworldly reaching-out into the vague, intangible, spiritual realm which is so marked in his Epistles.

But beyond the four Gospels, and in addition thereto, a great mass of writings grew up having the life and teachings of Jesus as their central point and motive. It was only a repetition of what before had come to the Law, and Sinai, and of what comes as an after-development in all religions. We have traces of sixty-nine Gos-

pels, Epistles, and Revelations, which have been lost, and twenty-two others still remaining, besides the twenty-seven which constitute the accepted New Testament canon. Many others there probably were whose names even have been lost to history. We find traces of such in the dust-heaps of Egypt, as the Gospel of Peter, and numerous fragments, nameless and dateless. All of these received a certain degree of recognition from the various churches of the first three hundred years of Christianity; but a process of natural selection was going on and out of the mass the Council of Nikaia, A.D. 325, by vote, adopted the four Gospels known as Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; Acts; the Letters of Paul, of James, of Peter, of John, of Jude; Hebrews, and Revelation, as those to be received as canonical.

Yet with these, as with the canon of the Old Testament among the Jews, this selection was not satisfactory to all, nor accepted without opposition, the dispute continuing for a number of centuries, and among the leaders of the churches. Many would have added to the number: and against some portions of the list, as selected, there has always been question and protest. It is also to be borne in mind that even in the canon as accepted, there are variant readings upon many points contained in the different Greek manuscripts which assume to give the life and words of Jesus, and certain sections whose authenticity is strongly questioned: and that while we have accepted the majority of the manuscripts which agree more or less in a common reading as a composite authority, yet the mere fact that there is a minority not thus agreeing throws an atmosphere of

at least some degree of uncertainty about all conclusions based upon the majority. The revision of 1880 has carried the work still further by rejecting certain sections and words of the books still retained, the test being in this case the preponderance of readings in the Greek manuscripts which are recognized as canonical, as even these do not all agree in their details: for instance, I John, V:7, the great basic text upon which the doctrine of the Trinity was chiefly built up, but which in the revision is rejected as spurious. The Roman Church also has made several revisions of its standard, the Latin Vulgate, and is now engaged in another revision, the work having been assigned to the scholarly Order of Benedictines.

In view of all this, who is prepared to say that the work of revision is now complete? And have not we, or our successors, the same right to further revise, or reject, as our forefathers? More: even a better right: for the knowledge of the lands, the language, the customs, the racial habits of thought, the historical surroundings, the manuscript records, is constantly growing broader and more accurate. And then newly discovered sources of information, as the well-authenticated Bryennios manuscripts, notably "The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles," are throwing additional light upon the early Church and its beliefs, rites, and teachings: in one case utterly invalidating one of the foundation rites of several large and influential Christian denominations, a rite which has been held as a standard requirement of church fellowship.

But the supreme and final test must still be—Inherent Probability. We cannot judge of the Scriptures by the vouching of others: for who is to vouch for the voucher? We can only judge by the intrinsic reasonableness and credibility of the subject matter. The message must be its own voucher. The very origin and authorship of the different books are lost in the obscurity of the past. Even the names of the supposed authors, and their personality, are points of tradition only. The Scriptures must be tested by the same rules as other historical documents.

### *Tradition*

Nor does it seem to be very important that the question as to the authorship of the various books should be satisfactorily settled—whether Moses, or someone else, wrote the Pentateuch; or whether there were two Isaiahs, or only one; or whether Paul, or Apollos, or Barnabas, was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; or whether the Gospel of John was written by John of the Twelve, the humble, uneducated fisherman, or whether—as the thought, the style, and the imagery, would seem to show—by some more highly educated, and more thoroughly trained mind. The one point of importance in it all is this—What elements of divine truth do the narratives contain: and what of light have they thrown upon the pathway to the hereafter? It is light that matters to the world: not names.

In these selections and revisions it has been the marvelous portions which have suffered most under the testing, and it is the great moral and spiritual teachings

which have endured. Will not the tendency be still further to question the marvelous features, and to lift still higher the moral and the spiritual teachings? For the so-called miraculous portions have in themselves no moral character, and carry with them no essential factors in the spiritual evolution of man. These are the marvels which are wont to gather about all noted lives, as the after years cloud and obscure the record.

Jesus of Nazareth has proved to be no exception to the rule. Witness the great mass of miraculous, often frivolous, tales of the many manuscripts which were rejected in the selection of the canonical books. And that some, possibly many, of these baseless marvels were unwittingly incorporated into the manuscripts which have been retained and made canonical, is exceedingly probable. Of these might be specified—the apparently purposeless turning of water into wine; the entering of the evil spirits into the herd of swine; the cursing of the fig tree which had no fruit upon it, when, as the narrative goes on to say, "for the time of figs was not yet"; the walking upon the water. The monkish traditions of the Early Church are full of tales of similar marvels as wrought by Jesus. The Old Testament Record is not without its similar wonder-tales, purposeless, and without moral bearing.

Nor can the absolute inerrancy of the accepted text of the Gospels be well maintained in the face of such lapses as the advice purporting to have been given by Jesus to his followers as told in Luke XVI:9, "And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," when, in the fourth verse

after, he says, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." In the passage in question the Greek negative particle μη has possibly been dropped out in transcribing. The entire incompatibility of the teachings is manifest. That any claim is set up even by the Scriptures themselves as to their divine inspiration as a whole, does not appear.

In the Old Testament Record, except in the especial cases where the introductory, "Thus saith the Lord," is made use of, no claim to divine authority is ordinarily set forth. And so of the New Testament Record. Sometimes the direct personality of Jesus appears, as in the passages prefaced by, "But I say unto you": but this is only a small portion of the record. Ordinarily his teachings are hearsay from a second party: and when he does speak as of himself, the divine origin of the message is largely a concession to his character, as to one who is manifestly in close, and unexplained, communion with God: but it is conceded, rather than asserted, the consensus of opinions being briefly summed up in the words of the officers sent to apprehend him, "Never man spake like this man." *John VII:46.* Apart from the quoted words of Jesus himself, the writers of the Gospels simply tell their tale without claims to aught but the credibility due to narrators of events and scenes with which they profess to have been conversant. The writers of the Epistles speak ordinarily as men reasoning about, and creed-building upon, the teachings of Jesus, and are largely silent as to any authority in themselves for the correctness of the deductions and conclusions which they draw therefrom.

The Scriptures, then, as they come to us, contain two very different things: First, the words which are given as of distinctly divine origin: namely, the cluster of commands from Sinai, which form the central point of the Old Testament Record: and the words of Jesus, himself, in the New Testament Record, as given in portions of the four Gospels. But, secondarily, about these two points as nuclei, have gathered the writings, the comments, the opinions and the theories of men, which go to make up the greater bulk of the book we call the Bible. It is never to be forgotten, however, that the center, the foundation of all, lies in the commands from Sinai, and in the direct words of Jesus himself: and to these we have the same right to go back in our investigations, and to build anew thereon, as had the Prophets, or the Apostles, or as had the ecclesiastical Councils, or the Church "Fathers," Early or Late. We must remember that these were only men: and men with less knowledge and less light than we ourselves have.

And in testing and weighing the reliability of the Scriptures, as we possess them, it is constantly to be borne in mind, as a caution to greater care, that the manuscripts which have come down to us are not the originals, but only copies of copies many times over, made upon perishable material, and with all the possibilities of change and errors, through defacement and illegibility in the repeated transcriptions, and through possible interpolations in an attempt to make clearer some doubtful or obscure passage, or to uphold some especial dogma or theory. As illustrative of this point may be cited the words printed in Italics in our ac-



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cepted version of the Scriptures. They are not part of the original, but are inserted to make clear the meaning, and because of verbal insufficiency in the original version. Suppose they were not printed in Italics?—to the reader they would then appear, and be believed, as a part of the original text. This fact will explain interpolations and emendations in early manuscripts: giving a certain uncertainty to many readings. Many such corrections are to be found in the revisions which have been made at various times by the Church Councils. That there are other corrections still needed, is manifest upon critical study of the last revision. It is also to be borne in mind that the original manuscripts were themselves, more especially in the Four Gospels, largely compilations from hearsay, made many years after the events and the teachings given in them had become fading memories in the minds of men, and were recounted by men who show in the selection of the material they severally incorporate that they had individual theories which they are endeavoring to upbuild.

Our oldest existing manuscripts of the Gospels date only as far back as the Eighth Century after Jesus had passed from the scene. And the various manuscripts which we do possess differ from each other, and fail to agree upon many important points of fact. Our accepted version of the Scriptures is simply a composite compromise made from the various and variant manuscripts which have come down to us as our sole authority: and this, after many manifest errors and interpolations have been eliminated. And it is also to be borne in mind in weighing the testimony of the alleged witnesses

of the life and the teachings of Jesus, and of the miraculous events therewith told, that the statements are not original testimony, given at first hand, but are only the hearsay of others, even hearsay of hearsay—and long after. This testimony would not be received in a court of law as competent. And the saying of this is not irreverence, nor quibbling skepticism, and it is not said in that spirit, but is only a frank admission of the truth that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and that we may face this self-evident fact. No greater harm can be done to a cause than to conceal, or to ignore, any question which may exist as to the reliability of any of the basic claims upon which it professes to be established, and then to try to force acceptance of doctrines built thereon. God does not need special pleading to establish His truths: nor, as a just God, could He expect, or demand, assent to dogmas thus propounded. "Come, let us reason together, saith the Lord!" *Isaiah I:18.* And Christianity will be strongest when it discards special pleading, and asks no favors from logic. It will still have enough sane, healthful, spiritual truth to amply satisfy the soul needs of man. But it must prune itself, and grow with his growth—or die.

Yet, withal, there is to be found running clear through the Scriptures, Old and New, like a vein of pure gold in its matrix of quartz, a vein of Divine Truth which never quite pinches out: sometimes growing thin, and almost lost in the baser setting of race prejudice, and race excesses: sometimes distorted and perverted to make excuse for race sins, and race cruelties and atrocities: but ever reappearing to bear witness

that God sleepeth not, and has not forgotten. This historic perspective of the continuity of Divine Purpose is more marked in the Old Testament than in the New: for that Old Testament holds the history of two thousands of years of race-life, while the New was lived to its last page within the narrow limits of two generations.

Probably no one will question the fact that Judæo-Christianity has in the Bible, Old and New Testaments, the most sanely complete code of morality that is to be found among the Sacred Writings of the world. Yet even the Bible has in it much that is irrelevant, much that is apparently self-contradictory, much that has been either rejected, or else quietly ignored. And this is not to be wondered at, for it was written during the earlier years of man's religious and spiritual life: and humanity has grown, until it has passed beyond the plane of that older life. It no longer accepts blindly. It demands, and it has a right to demand, a reason for its beliefs. It is the man spiritual keeping pace with the man intellectual. It is logic, not rhetoric, that Christianity needs.

### *The Writings of the Fathers*

About the teachings of the founders of the great religions of the world, as central points, have gathered, as the centuries have gone by, masses of written comments and expositions, which in the lapse of time have assumed a venerable aspect that has made them to be looked upon as of sacred, or semi-sacred, character. The old Jewish Law, as given at Sinai, in the after

years formed the nucleus for the clustering of biographical, of philosophical and moral teachings; of poetic idyls; of devotional hymns; of prophecies; of rituals—which together go to make up what we recognize as the Old Testament Scriptures; but, in addition to these, the Talmud and the various Rabbinical writings formed a second, and outer, circle supplementing the canonical books and which at times, and upon some points, seem to have virtually annulled the teachings of the Law itself. It is largely of these, and of their modifying influence upon the teachings of the Law, that Jesus speaks when he says to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." *Matthew XV:1, 6.* It was along a similar line of devolution that the teachings of Jesus, as found in the Four Gospels, became the starting-point and nucleus for an ever-growing mass of Church history, of epistles, of theological disquisitions, of revelations, of "Writings of the Fathers," Ante-, and Post-Nikaine, and on down through the centuries in the creeds, and in the libraries of theology. And in all these the only dividing line that can be drawn is at the words of Jesus himself: for, as with the accumulations about the Old Law, these were not the Message, only comments upon, and about, the Message.

As the words from Sinai, and the words of Jesus himself, represent the portions of the Scriptures which we are wont to class as divine, so these comments and additions represent the human portion. Failure to draw the line clearly and distinctly between the two has been the cause of much confusion in religious thought, and

has given ground for much of the theological controversy of the after ages. It is upon these human additions, rather than upon the strictly Divine Message, that the creeds have in the main been built: for to them, as said, has been accorded a rank as authorities scarcely, if at all, inferior to the Divine Message itself. And, as just stated, it was of such a procedure with the Old Testament Record that Jesus speaks, when he reproaches the Jews with exalting the traditions of the Elders above the Law, and so making the divine command of no effect.

Among these commentators upon, and adders to, the teachings of Jesus, Paul stands first. He, most of all, helped to give color and shape to the creeds which began to grow up about the words of Jesus after he had passed from the scene. Indeed, our theology is largely Pauline, rather than Christian, in type: and Paul was, above all else, a Jewish theologian and controversialist made over again. The old Saul of Tarsus was instinct with the wolf-blood of Benjamin, which was never quite eradicated, but still lived on in the new-born Paul, to sway him with the intolerant Rabbinical teachings, and to grip him with the Oriental fatalism. See *Romans VIII:29, 30.* And we have accustomed ourselves to view the Jesus of the Gospels through the eyes of Paul, who is ever bent upon making Jesus of Nazareth conform in type to the older ritualistic and prophetic prototypes of the Christ.

Yet the important point is not—What did Paul think? It is—What did Jesus say? For Paul, even years after his becoming a professed disciple of Jesus,

is a man still vacillating and fluctuating between the old and the new. Nineteen years after he has been preaching the gospel of uncircumcision, he takes uncircumcised Timotheus and circumcises him after the old Jewish rite: *Acts XVI:3;* A.D. 53. But six years later he writes to the Galatians, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I, Paul, say unto you that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall avail you nothing." *Galatians, V:12;* A.D. 59. And twenty-six years after he has been preaching that Jesus was the one true and final sacrifice for sin, and that with his death upon the cross the old Passover rite as a Covenant seal was put aside, he yet goes up to Jerusalem to keep the Passover feast: and there, with the advice and counsel of James and the Elders, undergoes the prescribed Jewish ritualistic forms for purification, and has the Jewish altar offerings made in expiation, thus ignoring the Christ sacrifice on Calvary. See *Acts XVIII:21; XXI:17, 26; XXIV:18,* A.D. 60. This is not the course of one fully convinced in his own mind, nor of one to whom a revelation, complete and final, has been made. Rather would it seem to be the mind of one still undecided, and groping, and still insensibly biased by early teachings and associations; yet out of it all slowly evolving a theory, and laying foundations for a creed.

But, it has been urged, Paul had divine inspiration back of his words. As a matter of justice to Paul the question may fairly be asked—Does Paul himself make any such claim? While he does claim and assert divine

commission for his apostleship to preach the Gospel of Jesus, he yet is silent as to any authority as a mouthpiece of God in his Epistles. And if he had made such claim, it would be entitled to the same weight, neither more nor less, as is accorded to similar claims made by others of the many teachers who have appeared, and who have outlined creeds, and built up a following. In each case it is the unsupported statement of the interested party about himself. And with all, the crucial test at the last is the same, *inherent probability* or *improbability:* for the human mind is strangely, yet often honestly, incapable of judging of its own experiences, and especially along the line of the supernatural. And the fact just alluded to, of Paul's long vacillation between the old and the new, would be difficult to explain if divine inspiration were conceded to his writings.

And then, Paul himself changed as the years went by. There is an almost immeasurable distance spiritually between Paul of the earlier years, and of the Epistles to the Churches even, and Paul, "the aged," who, tried and mellowed and softened, writes from the prison cell the Epistles to Timothy and to Philemon. It is the distance between the somewhat arrogant, controversial creed-builder, with the masterful stamp of Gamaliel still upon him, and the humble, chastened soul that stands waiting by the brink of the Valley of the Shadow—less self-assertive, apparently less self-confident, but kindlier and wiser. The forty years of homeless wandering, and the disappointments, have brought their richer fruitage of humility. The Jesus impress is beginning to efface Gamaliel. And then the glimpses

into the beyond! Eyes that have once looked into eternity are never quite the same again.

The "Church at Jerusalem" remained largely Judæic in form. It was the Gentile world of Alexandria, of Asia Minor, and of the Farther East, and the Farther West, that swayed Christianity away from its earlier type. Without this new and extraneous influence, Christianity would probably have remained simply as a reform sect in Judæism. This influence, and this possibility, are both shown in the contention at that first Church Council, held in Jerusalem, and as told of in Acts XV:13, 21. Yet the change came: and it was much the same unnoted change as that which came to Romanism under Elizabeth in England, where, with no marked break between old and new, as the years of her long reign went by, and the older generation, trained under Roman influence, passed away, men after a while awoke to the fact that the old was gone, and a new phase of Christianity had been born into the theological world in its stead. But the Church at Jerusalem, and in Syria, and the Farther East, did not appreciably change. The Semitic surroundings were too strong. The older Judæism survived. Christianity died out. And for nearly twenty centuries the religion founded by Jesus of Nazareth has been an alien and a stranger in the land of its birth. It is so that Buddhism has died out in the land of Asoka. Its temples, and its devotees, are no longer to be found by the banks of the Sacred River. It, too, is an alien in the land of its birth. And the cause is the same—a failure to permanently fit into the race-type.

### *The Voice of God*

I have spoken of three sources of authority in spiritual research: yet with it all, and back of all, there is more. Apart from the Written Record, apart from Tradition, and the Writings of the Fathers, there is more. It is the Voice of God speaking directly to the human soul. And He does thus speak. Men in all ages have heard, and have heeded, this Inner Voice. The old prophets from the Wastes of the Desert heard it. Socrates heard it. The negro in the enforced spiritual darkness of his chains, and his slavery, heard it. The Red man, in the sequestered shade of the forest trees, heard it. He knew the Great Spirit: and no man had told him. It was the human soul in direct touch with God. All whose souls are not dulled by grossness and sin, hear the Voice. And the purer the life, the clearer the Voice. We call it conscience: It is God.

### *Is the Canon of the Scriptures Finally Closed?*

Is the canon of the Scriptures finally closed? Has God no further word of revelation to the soul of man? The Samaritan claims that the canon of the Scriptures was closed with the five books of the Pentateuch; and he rejects all that comes after. The Jew thought the canon was closed with the last message of the old-time Prophets: and he refused to receive the words of Jesus. The Christian Church has for ages claimed that the Jew was in error upon this point, and that the canon must be extended to include the teachings of Him of Nazareth, and the cluster of Apostolic Writings which,

with the passing years, gathered about them; but that this, at last, really was the end, and that no further word of revelation is to be looked for from God. But the question naturally arises—What better, or more assured ground has the Christian for his assumption than had the Samaritan or the Jew? For with all three it is purely assumption, as no word in either the Old or New Testament Record gives even a shadow of authority for such a conclusion: and with both, the presumption would be against them, for it would not seem reasonable or probable that God would entrust His complete Message to the ignorant ages of the world, with their dimmer apprehension of spiritual truths, and their limited facilities for preserving the record, and should have no further word for the more enlightened ages of man.

Rather would it seem more reasonable and probable that, with the clearer spiritual consciousness of increasing maturity in the soul-life of humanity, God's Voice should be again heard revealing to man's soul-needs yet higher planes of spiritual being, and the pathway thereto. The manner of the revelation we may not surmise. It might be God's Voice, as of old. It might be the Inner Voice of a keener, more discerning, spiritual consciousness. And it might be some form of revelation of which we, bound by our earthly limitations, cannot as yet even conceive. But should it come, as would seem possible, God is able to arouse in the soul of man the consciousness that again it is His Voice, and that again the Canon of God's Message to the world has been added to.

And again it must be a message which the reason of man can accept as believable: or, under the laws of being and belief which God himself has established, man could not be held legally or morally responsible for its acceptance, or blameable for its rejection. But until such further word of revelation does come, and in such manner as to convince human reason of its intrinsic probability, man can only base his religious beliefs upon such spiritual light, recorded or self-seen, as has already been made clear to him. And in the future of the spiritual evolution of man and his creeds, as in the past, the wisdom of that old Latin injunction, *"Festina lente,"* "Make haste slowly," becomes ever more apparent. Heaven will keep. God's ways are of the eternities, not the years. And the fulness of God's time is not always come. And, as often of old, there be false prophets, as well as true.

Yet, that there are voicings from the Beyond, probably no man of keen spiritual perception can well question. They were once; and we accept the record. Why not again? Is the need less? Or has the human soul changed? Or has God changed? Was Patmos the last? And John—and the night-waters of the Ægean?

## De Profundis

Out of the night they come,
Night, and the lonely sea:
With a weird, strange grasp on the soul they come,
The voices that call to me.

It is not the sound of the winds,
Nor the thrill of the midnight breeze:
For the winds of the sea are only winds,
As the wind in the upland trees.

It is not the sound of the surf
Afar in the breakers flung:
For the long white line of the moonlit surf
Calls with another tongue.

Out of the night they call,
Night, and the lonely sea:
And the night is filled, and thrilled, with all
The voicings that come to me.

Somewhere within the night,
Somewhere beyond the deep,
Are voices that call: and the weird midnight
Has banished the hush of sleep.

Ever, the dark within,
They call, and call, to me,
As the sound of a bugle drifting in
Across the night-wrapped sea.

# IV

## THE PROBLEM OF THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL

A STRANGE problem confronts the human soul: A God, omniscient, omnipotent, the Creator of all things, and Whose nature must be pure and good, and Who presumably desires only good for all the beings He has created: yet in and through all, the existence of evil, which is ever apparently thwarting His plans, and marring the perfection of His works, and bringing misery and ruin to His creatures. And within the human soul, unbidden, will spring up the inquiries:

Did not God foreknow all this? If not, then surely He cannot be omniscient.

Could He not have prevented it? If not, then He surely cannot be omnipotent.

Was it a part of His plan? If so, then is He not the author of evil?

And these questions, and the logical deductions therefrom, arise unbidden, and will not down; never have downed; and never can down, until some satisfactory solution is found. And that solution, to be satisfactory, must answer to the logical requirements of man's mind. Nor can it be considered irreverent for God's creatures to ask these questions, or to seek a solution; for He, their Creator, has made them so. And more!—to turn away from these questions: or to refuse

to investigate, or to seek a solution, is no evidence of piety; it is not even evidence of respect for the God Who gave to man reasoning faculties, and a mind which will not rest in the presence of an unsolved mystery.

What is meant by the term, "Evil"? In answer it may be said, that evil is best defined by antithesis. It is the opposite, the negative, of good. It is that which, in the spiritual realm, battles against, mars, and tears down and wrecks, what good has built up. It is the opposing element to God's law of rightness, or righteousness. It is not a problem peculiar to Judæo-Christianity. All men know of it. All religions recognize it as the opposing force in their struggle for good. And thinking minds in all lands, and among all peoples and faiths, have ever puzzled over the difficulty of reconciling its existence with the idea of an all-wise, and all-powerful, over-ruling God. The knowledge of it is world-wide, and ancient as the centuries. Those old Aryan hymns of our far-off kin, sung to the Maruts, or Storm Gods, four thousand years ago upon the uplands of Inner Asia, tell of it. The Avestas of the Highlands of Iran, ages before David lived that Fifty-first Psalm, or Paul penned the Epistle to the Romans, are full of the spiritual battle with it. They ever voice one long, troubled cry over the conflict which never ends, the battling of Ahriman, the Prince of Evil, with Ormuzd, the God of Light. It is this battling of good and evil, and Fate which changes not, that lies back of the cycle of blood-guilt tragedies which centered about ill-fated Thebes in the dim days when Greece was yet young. Buddhism is one long, agonized, hopeless wail wrung

out of the Asiatic heart against its malign power. Socrates, moved by that Inner Spirit of which he spake, lifted up his voice against it to the fickle Athenian populace generations before Paul stood upon Mars Hill: lifted up his voice—and died of the hemlock. His prison cell was the Greek Calvary: the poison cup, his cross. Mohammed, with his measure of divine inspiration, never ceased to warn against evil to the Desert Peoples. And our own old Norse ancestors, about the shores of the winter seas, knew of the soul-stress that was born of the bitter struggle with it. Its baneful fruitage in life, not simply human life, but all created sentient life, we call "Sin."

Is there, then, a reasonable, a philosophical, explanation of this apparent anomaly of the existence of evil under the laws of an omniscient and omnipotent God? —an explanation which shall leave Him consistent with His own divine nature? Yes!—for in the very nature of things the possibility of evil is inevitable under spiritual law. And it could not be otherwise, for *Evil* is the logical and inescapable antithesis and corollary of *Good*: as much so as the fact in the physical universe that side-by-side with the law of light must exist the possibility of its absence—and that is darkness: that where there is an up, there must be its counterpart, a down: that where there is an in, there must be, as its opposite, an out. Nor can it, in the very nature of things, be otherwise. And under this law of logical and inescapable opposites as limitations, even Divine Power must act. Without this, law would cease to be, and chaos reign supreme. The underlying principle is, that

where there is law, the law, by its very existence, implies, and carries with it, the possibility of its infraction, and of its opposite. Given a law of right, of good, and at once comes into existence, and coetaneously, the possibility that it may be broken whenever there is a free-willed being who is under that law: and this, the unright, that which comes of the breaking of the law, is that to which we apply the term, "Evil." Keen-witted Paul caught this idea when he said, "Where there is no law, there is no transgression." *Romans IV:15.* And again, "I had not known sin but by—[διᾰ, "through"] —the law." *Romans VII:7.*

Is evil exceptional and local in the universe—or is it, on the contrary, general in scope? There was a time, in the religious history of man, when evil was apparently looked upon as purely temporal, and local, and exceptional. Under the influence of the Edenic idyl men looked back to a time when, theoretically, evil was not. Yet—strange anomaly—the idyl itself presupposes the existence of an active agent of evil, the Tempter: and if evil, then presumptively sin: for sin is only active evil, evil asserting itself through free-willed, sentient agency. However, that evil could be thus temporal, and local, and exceptional, would be to contravene all we know of the character of God's laws elsewhere: for wherever we trace Him in His works, we always find His laws to be general in scope, and unlimited in time. The local idea originated presumably with that other local idea of a geocentric Universe, with the one small world in which we live as the center of all things. But with the broadening of man's conception of the Uni-

verse, and the almost inescapable presumption of other habitable worlds innumerable in space about us, and each probably peopled with created beings living out their lives under God's organic laws, came the pertinent inquiry: If these worlds are, as science seems to prove, framed and evoluting under the same physical laws as govern our own, is it not reasonable to infer that they are also under the same great moral laws? Would God presumably frame the one law of physical being for them and for us, but frame another, and unlike, of spiritual existence for each? Such a supposition can hardly be reconciled with our conception of the unity of the Universe, and of God as a Being of broad, far-reaching, general and eternal law.

The basic view of a law of evil as an essential and unavoidable concomitant of a law of good, must then carry with it the principle that evil is not local, nor temporal, but universal, and eternal, and that wherever, and whenever, in any place, or any age of eternity, in world spheres or in heavenly spheres, a law of good is established, and free-willed beings are created under that law, evil is an ever-present possibility. The broadness of this law of evil is hinted at in the Epistle of Jude, 6th verse: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." The second Epistle of Peter, II:4, quoting evidently from the same original source, makes allusion to the same general belief.

This view, of evil as an essential and unavoidable concomitant of the law of good, makes God consistent

with Himself and with His own laws. He is no longer taken unawares by an unforeseen break in His plans concerning man. His foreknowledge need no longer be questioned. His omnipotence is only self-limited by the logical working of His own laws: and these laws are no longer local, and special, and temporal, but general, and broad, and eternal, as the universe of worlds and of created beings. And in it all we are beginning to discern that the structure which Judæo-Christianity has built up for one world, and for the centuries, is only an episode in a vastly greater drama of worlds unnumbered, and of the eternities.

### *The Problem of Sin*

Sin may be defined as active evil. And it involves, as its essential factor, a sinner, one who of self-will does the evil. But against whom is the sin? The common assumption is that it is against God: and in the sense of disobedience to His established law of righteousness, this is manifestly true. And from this view apparently sprang that old Hebræic idea of an offended deity who must be placated by offerings. It was the divine idea brought down to the rather ignoble level of human passions and human weaknesses. It was against this idea that the most earnest protests of the old Prophets were made.

"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" *Isaiah I:11, 12.*

And again: "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goat out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" *Psalm L.*

This idea that God is to be placated by gifts of material things is common to many religions, but belongs in the lower stages of man's spiritual evolution; when as yet he is not grown up to the measure of the greatness of his God. "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." *Psalm L:21.*

But there is a deeper, more deadly aspect to sin than this. It lies in the wrong of the sinner against himself, the wounding to his own soul. And the aspect of the two phases of sin must, under God's laws, be essentially different. We may readily see how the one, God may forgive and blot out; but the other, the sin against one's own soul—it is not so easy to see how divine forgiveness can antidote this. A failure to distinguish between the two, a confusing of the offense against God's law and the sin against self, has tended apparently to a lowered sense of the deadly peril of sin. It seems so easy to turn to God and say, "I repent me of my sin. Forgive!" If only this were all! But the self-wounding, the soul hurt, the scar even—how about these?

We can readily see how the divine forgiveness for the broken law may, in a moment, be extended to the repentant sinner, and he may again stand with God. It is the restoration of the returning prodigal to the forfeited home. But the soul-hurt, the lowered moral plane of the prodigal days—can aught but time, and soul travail, and the slow toiling upward again, undo this, and repair the soul-hurt? Are we to suppose that the repentant robber upon the cross, with a life of violence, and vice, and blood behind him, could, in a moment of time, be fitted to stand side-by-side in moral sanity with John, the pure-hearted, kindly mystic of the Twelve? It is not so with the working of God's law in other things, and elsewhere in His Universe. I have a scar upon my hand—a cut made when a child. It was made, and healed, more than seventy years ago. It does not impair the use of the hand. But the scar is there, and will be with me to the grave. Is it so with the soul —and eternity?

And sin must ever be the same. It cannot change with Dispensations, or Covenants, or Creeds. What is right at one time must be right at all times: and conversely, what is wrong at one time must be wrong at all times: else are God's laws of right and wrong not general but special, and do not harmonize, but conflict with each other: and this is not consistent with the conception of God as an all-wise, and all-powerful, and self-consistent Being. "I am the Lord, I change not." *Malachi III:6.*

That sin is in the world, no man can question: hideous, soul-blasting sin; blood-guilt, cruelty, immorality,

home-wrecking sin. Its wounds, its scars, are everywhere: maimed, deformed lives; the wilfully sinful; the weakly sinful; the hypocritically sinful. No human intelligence can estimate its warping influence upon the innocent lives about it: only God can know. Ignorance, heredity, environment, are its handmaids. Human reason falters perplexed, appalled, before its problems. Yet, this we must remember if we are to hold fast to spiritual sanity—this: That back of all, back of the seeming chaos, still there is Law—and the Eternities—and God; and that it is not chance, not fate, not "the gods careless of mankind," but the slow, purposeful working out of some ultimate, greater uplift for humanity—and that for the ills, the pangs of the years, are the healing cycles of eternity to make good—and that our perplexity is because we see only in part. We can see the tangled threads of God's weaving, we do not yet see the perfected pattern from the loom.

With this possibility of sin before the human soul, one might not unreasonably ask—Why, then, was man created as a free-willed being? Why not rather as one whose will could not vary from the law? We can only say in reply, that God has never told. Yet this much would seem reasonable to us: that in the end it is by this way, and probably by this way alone, that the highest good can come to humanity. The child is happy even as the butterfly flitting in the sunshine, without care or burden. But it is the gladness that is born of immaturity. Not to such can the deepest joy come. The deepest joy is born of the battling, the struggle to overcome. It is not to the one who remains quietly and securely at

home, to know the deep thrill of victory won: it is to him who arms himself for the conflict and enters into the fray. The old exultant Berserker rage of our Norse forefathers had a spiritual counterpart, also. Æneas knew the joy of battling when he said of the deeds of arms on the windy plain of Ilium, *"Et quorum pars magna fui."* It is of such that John speaks when he says, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the house of my God." *Revelation III:12.* And it is ever to be borne in mind that sin lies, not in the tempting—for this is only testing—but in the yielding.

But man is not left to face the conflict with sin in ignorance, nor alone. That Old Covenant Record is one continuous sounding of the alarm. "This way danger lies!" is the warning at every avenue to sin; and the cry is ever, "Turn ye! Turn ye! for why will ye die?" And always the accusing conscience—that voice of God in the human soul. For sin is abnormal: and the soul cannot rest away from God. And always the pursuing voice of reproach, the haunting thought of the lost innocence, the unhushed cry of the wrong-doing. It is the avenging shriek of the Erinyes in the old Greek Tragedies. Earth has no hiding-place for the soul that has sinned. The crime becomes its own Nemesis. Sin makes of the sinner an outcast upon the face of the spiritual earth, even as that one with the bloodstain upon him in the days of old. Two pictures have come down to us from the long-gone past that have burned themselves into the heart of the world as with the sear of fire:

## Cain

"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. . . A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." *Genesis IV.*

The skies are red above me:
The earth is blood beneath me:
The winds shriek death about me:
Blood, blood is on my hands!

No stream will wash the staining:
No sun can light the glooming:
No voice can still the crying:
Blood! blood! and God's dread curse!

I thought no eye beheld me:
I thought no doom could find me:
I thought no mark was on me:
My hands, my hands are red!

That cold, still face is with me:
I flee—it still is with me:
O God—but God pursues me:
Blood! blood! My hands are red!

A bird piped, Blood! above me:
A wolf howled, Blood! before me:
A snake hissed, Blood! beside me:
O God—my hands are red!

I dare not stop: upon me
The horror rests: and on me
The curse of blood that blinds me:
Blood! blood! the red, red blood!

No human eye may know of the branding: but it is there. The covered sin is not covered to the eye of God. No agonized cry, "Out, damnèd spot!" can efface it. Sleeping or waking, the shrinking soul must tell. David told. Read Psalm LI:

### Mea Culpa

It was a king. He sat upon a throne.
The morning sun shone down, deep flooding all,
Palace and street, and on away beyond
To the green, cedared heights of Lebanon.
And all was his, and gold, and Orient pearls,
And all that men call wealth: and his the power
That kings are wont to hold. And men beheld,
And said, "Lo, he is King, and Lord of all!
The lives of such are sweet, and full of joy.
The peace of God is with him. He is glad!"

. . . . . .

Prone on the floor, within the midnight gloom,
And close-shut door, alone with night and God,
A King is writhing in his agony.
And from the lips, the tense-drawn, bloodless lips,
A cry goes up, a soul-wrung, bitter cry:
"My sin! my sin! My blood-guilt, covered sin!
Can God blot out that smear of red, red blood?
Can God bring back the dead?" The ages since
Have never hushed that cry: it still goes up
From other lands. And still the blood, the dead:
And still the agony.

### *Forever and Forever?*

Does the possibility of getting back to Good and God belong to this life only? Is the doom sealed for eternity with the going-out of the bodily breath here upon earth: and is there no possibility of hope beyond? I find no just warrant for such a belief in the Scriptures themselves. Upon this point God seems simply not to have spoken. But, one asks, "How about, 'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever'?" *Revelations XLV:11.* The Greek manuscript did not say this. It is εις αιωνας αιωνων, "to the ages of ages," and that is not "for ever and ever." The Greek mind seemed to have had little conception of infinity. There was always a limit. In time it is always εις αιωνας αιωνων. *"In saecula saeculorum,"* the Vulgate more accurately, and more guardedly, renders it; not, *in aeternitatem.* Yet we are in a region where no man can say, I know, upon either side of the question. We have passed beyond the sounding-lines of time, out into the fathomless depths of eternity.

### *A Spiritual Dead-Line—Where?*

Possibly a more vital question is this—Can a human soul, either in this life, or in the Hereafter, sin beyond a line where it no longer has power to turn back—a line beyond which evil becomes master? And may it unconsciously slip over a dead-line beyond which there is no return possible to Good and God: but only a seared conscience, and doom before it? I do not know. Yet there is a hinting in the Scriptures of such a possi-

bility. "My spirit shall not always strive with man," was the warning Voice of God ages ago. *Genesis VI:3.* Maybe God has purposely left the point obscure, lest man might take advantage of the knowledge to go on sinning to the last moment, thinking—Then will I turn. This we know: That God has not told: and no man knows the limit, and the dead-line.

In the old Army days, I stood one day alone upon the brink of one of the great earthquake cracks that have rent the rocky mesas of Northern Arizona. It was in the midst of the Apache country, where life hangs upon the quickness of a shot. In one hand I held the bridle-reins of my horse, in the other my rifle; while I kept careful watch behind for Indians. My feet were just upon the brink of a chasm abrupt as the walls of a house, while away below, hundreds and hundreds of feet, the chasm yawned. A foot farther, or the faltering of a muscle, and it meant death. I stood; and looked down into the abyss: yet I had no fear. I knew the danger-line: and had control of every nerve, every muscle.

But there was another place. It was a great granite peak of the Chiricahua mountains above the Post at Apache Pass, where I was stationed as surgeon for a year. There was the huge, rocky mass of the mountain: the bare, weather-beaten summit; but beyond, a smooth, sloping incline ever growing a little steeper—then the sheer drop of a thousand feet to the jagged rocks below. You might walk out upon it, and at first scarcely notice that the incline was steadily growing steeper. But somewhere out upon that treacherous slope was a line

where the feet would slip, and slip; and there would be no possibility of return—only, the swift sliding downward; and then the sheer plunge a thousand feet to the jagged rocks and death. That place I could never go near: for somewhere upon the smooth slope was a deadline; and I did not know where that line might be. Is it so with Eternity and sin?

### *Hell—Where, and What?*

In Dore's illustrations of Dante's Inferno is a picture of a gloomy cavern's mouth with the legend above the portals, "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here!" And beyond, dim scenes of unspeakable bodily torture. Dante only paraphrased the current theological conceptions of his age: and it was not so very long ago. I myself saw, in a church, lurid paintings of men chained to iron gratings, with the fires of torment blazing beneath. The pictures are not there now. They have been quietly suppressed. With thinking men it is scarcely worth while even to speak of such matters, much less to controvert. Yet men of old believed them: and even today large portions of the Christian world have not risen above the level of these crude conceptions. With such it might not be amiss to ask—How shall bodily pain be inflicted upon a body which has already gone back to mingle with the earth from which it came? Have we as yet fully grasped the thought that Heaven and Hell are conditions rather than places? That where a clean conscience is, there is Heaven? That where sin is, there is a conscience that becomes as a flaming fire:

smothered it may be, for a while, but burning within until mere existence is as the torment of perdition? Omar Khayyam, sot in his cups, grasped, with his wine-sodden brain, this truth, and expressed it in the line of a quatrain:

"I, myself, am Heaven or Hell."

The soul-torture of an evil conscience; remorse; the scorching flames of sin—these are a fire that dieth not out. "For wickedness—[*rishaw,* "iniquity," "sin"]—burneth as the fire." *Isaiah IX:18.* Heaven—you may see it in eyes here upon earth. Hell—it is burning in souls that walk the streets. Eternity is here. But the face does not always show the Hell within.

## In Flammis Tormenti

In far-off land there lived one time a man;
Maybe yet lives, I cannot surely tell;
And out before the world he daily walked:
With cheerful face he walked, and went and came,
A smile upon his lips; and on the street
With pleasant greeting daily met each friend.
And men looked at him as he passed them by,
And raised their hands, and pointing at him said,
"Behold, a happy man! No sting of care
Is felt beneath that ever-cheerful face;
No print of sorrow lies upon his brow;

The heart must surely rest in happiness
Beneath so calm a face. O happy man!"
Then came to him one day, upon the street,
One who had watched him in his daily walk
With thoughts of envy; and he, longing, said,
"Thy days are surely happy: life is sweet
To such as thee. O happy, happy man!
Teach me to know thy joy."

But no reply
Came from the lips of him who thus was prayed:
Only, a moment, with a gesture slight,
The vesture from his breast he turned aside,
And motioned with his hand to look:

And, lo!
The heart that men deemed happy, in a flame
Of burning fire was wrapped. The tender flesh
Crisped in the curling blaze, and smoked, and shrank
With no escape: but, stern and pitiless,
The fiery flame, fierce as the furnace blast,
Seared every tendril, and with cruel tongue
Licked up the life-blood, and was never quenched.

Then, with a gesture courteous, he turned,
Closing his vesture: and he went his way
Upon the street again, and made no sign.
Only, a moment, to the tight-drawn lips
A pallor came: and on the knotted brow,
Clammy and cold as scathed with mortal pain,

Oozed out, and for a moment trembling stood,
Great beaded drops of sweat. And then he bowed,
And calmly went his way.

"The moral?"—Friend!
There is no moral. It is only said,
His face wore still its calm: and still he smiled,
And daily walked the streets, and made no sign.

### *Judgment Day*

And Judgment Day? Is it now: and every day of my life: with its daily deeds graven into the human soul? Will there be need of further judging? Is human life only one long, never-ceasing Day of Judgment? When I pass the portals of death, must I not carry Myself with me, and must I not be, what I have made of Myself? Every act, every thought, of this life is molding and shaping my whole being. If I mar, the deformity is there. If I make, the gain is there. And, "The Book"? Am not I, myself, The Book? I am what I have made of myself. Nothing can change that. Is there need of further judgment? Have I not already determined my due place in the eternity to come? Was Omar Khayyam right after all, when he said, "I, myself, am Heaven or Hell"?

And I—when conscience unrolls the whole past before me, must not I say: The record is there; I cannot dispute it. And the award, whether for good or for ill —I made it myself. I am reaping what I have sown. And must not I, also, find that I, myself, am Heaven or Hell? Must I not say—"God, it is just"?

### *Walking Again With God*

Walking again with God! No longer, as in that old story of the Garden, a child with the years before him, simple-hearted, never having known evil, but man who has known the sting of sin. Man with the years behind him. Man, no longer proud, defiant, but with eyes that have blinded to the bitterness of tears, and with a chastened, humble heart. He has eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil: and now he knows.

Was it all a mistake—the placing of man where temptation might come? And has God through all the weary ages only been trying to repair the wrong, to correct the error? I cannot think so. I do not understand, I may never understand, the mystery of it all: yet this, it seems to me, I see—that through it has been made possible a nobler, grander man than he who that day walked in The Garden, ignorant of evil: that out of the trial, the testing, has come strength; for temptation is testing: and that through the ceaseless roll of the eternities the man whom God has made, the man whom He suffered to be tested, but with whom He reasoned and pled, the man with whom He has gone down into the Valley of the Shadow, this man with whom Jesus, as God's Messenger, walked the weary by-ways of earth, sharing the burden that he might win him back, crying, "O My Brother, I will die with thee!"—this man will know the great loving heart of the Father as the Adam of the Garden never could: this man, with heart that has vibrated to the quiver of pain, can love God with a love such as the child-heart of an Adam

never could have known, for love has won him back. And this man, with the scars of the battling with sin upon him, has, of his own free will, come back to God. In this fact lies the vindication of God's ways with man.

Possibly the greatest, the noblest act of God is, not the creation of the Universe, not the giving of life to the angelic hosts, but the making of a free-willed creature that may defy Him: and then making that creature an independent judge to pass judgment upon the works of his Maker. Of the days of Creation it is written that as God looked upon his own work he said, "It is good." But who else is to pass judgment upon the works and ways of the Creator? To man, the man whom he has made, God has given to pass judgment. And man, after tasting of Good and Evil, turns back from his evil ways to God again, saying, "I have seen God's works: I have tested His ways: I have tried His judgments: and, lo, they are altogether right and good!"

And will man at last stand? Yes! for he has tasted of the fruitage of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil, and of his own free will he has turned back from Evil, and chosen Good. It is not only the vindication of God's ways with man, but it is also the vindication of free will. Man has learned to know Good and Evil: has learned to know through all the long ages of misery and pain. The mystery of sin is a mystery to him no more. The mystery was death. He has passed through the Valley of the Shadow. He will not travel that road again. For, wise in the wisdom gained of the bitter fruit, he has made his choice, and *wills not to sin.*

### *Heaven—Where, and What?*

And the Heaven Beyond—What is it? We do not know. The veil has never been lifted. Yet there have been glimpses: possibly misinterpreted, misunderstood: glimpses of things spiritual, but told in earthly words, when told at all. Paul does not even try: the language of earth had no adequate words. He only says, "he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." *II Corinthians, XII:4.* John heard that song which no man could know. How did he pierce beyond the veil? We may call it revelation. But revelation—what is it? Is it, after all, only the stronger, clearer spiritual vision of highly gifted souls? And do we all, after a measure, have revelations? Heaven—Paul did not try to tell: and John could only make use of the language and the imagery of this life, and of earth, to tell. But this much we know—it was a vision of a life of greater things beyond. He was in the grip of forces not of this earth. It was the broader life—the life where God dwells. And yet still we cannot know. The body mortal could not endure the strain. The swell of the gigantic crescendo—this much the mortal hearing caught: but the words, no man could tell. What was that song? Was it only the rhythmic sweep of the mighty events of eternity, akin to that pæan when "the morning stars sang together"? Was it an echo of this that I heard that night in the basaltic canyon away up in the Chiricahua mountains on the crest of the continent, in the old Army days, when the midnight wind sang its anthem in the quivering needles of the pines? Somehow it seemed to my ears as

the measureless anthem of Eternity. After more than sixty years it still holds me in its spell.

And yet, that Heaven can be radically unlike this earthly life is scarcely conceivable. The old loves could not die out: the old ties could not be thus broken: nor does the Universe seem to be the field of sudden change, but rather of the progressive working out of forces along the continuous lines of Law that is fixed and not changing. It is progress; and not change. That other life must be this life, only broader, vaster, with the shackles of the flesh cast off. The emancipated spirit must reach on, and upward, to higher things: the finite mind that much nearer to the infinite: the vision broader: the perception keener: the power to grasp, to take in, more expanded: still man, but a grander, nobler, broader man. The pictures given in the Scriptures, notably in Revelation, must be taken as figurative, an attempt to portray spiritual things by material. That the mind of a Newton, a Tyndall, an Agassiz, could be content to spend an eternity in singing anthems, harp in hand, is not believable. Yet what was that song which John heard? Was it only the rhythmic sweep of the vaster forces of eternity, attuned to ears immortal? And at last shall we know?

## "Et Cantabant Quasi Canticum Novum"

—Apocalypsis: caput xii., 3

As the voice of many waters
That comes up from the sea,
As the sound from the far-off sand wastes
When the desert winds sweep free
Through the loneness of the midnight,
They sang triumphantly.

They sang, with the harpers harping:
And the song rose with a swell
That spread to the deepest heavens:
And, lo, the wondrous spell
Was resting upon the nations!
But the song no man could tell.

The thrill of a mighty gladness
Like a subtile current ran
Through the measures of the music
That hushed, and then began,
And swelled to the farthest heavens
As the sweep of the hurricane.

And the hearts of the nations hungered
That the voicing they might know,
And the harping of the harpers,
That ever to and fro
Through the ages swelled and echoed,
As the ages come and go.

And the harpers kept a-harping,
And still the singers sang,
Till the arches of the heavens
With the mighty music rang:
But the song—no man could learn it,
Nor the words the singers sang.

Heaven—What is it? And again, we can only wait! God has not told. Yet this much we know—It is Victory, and the

GLAD NEW SONG

# V

# THE THEORY OF A FALL, AND THE PENALTY

IN Judæo-Christianity the theory of sin in the human race, as based upon and deduced from the Scripture Record, is briefly as follows:

I. That the human race first made its appearance upon earth in a state of pristine innocency, and in close intercourse with God.

II. That one man and one woman, the first progenitors of mankind, and created in this state of innocency, sinned by disobeying a command of God.

III. That the penalty, announced beforehand as a deterrent from disobedience, was to be death.

IV. That by heredity the guilt and the penalty of these two primary offenders passed on to their children unborn, throughout all generations, although they had had no part or possible will in the original transgression.

Let us test these propositions, as just stated:

I. That the human race first made its appearance upon earth in a state of pristine innocency, and in close personal intercourse with God. We are now slowly unfolding the race-history upon earth. The spade of the antiquary, and the linguistic research of the philologist, tell a story very different from that just stated. The

unearthed records go back over a reach of many thousands of years: and everywhere the tale is the same—a gradual evolution of man from a state of primitive savagery and violence upward to a plane of better things: a plane of better living, of a higher type of family life, of violence dying out, of a growing regard for the rights of others, of a clearer spiritual consciousness, of a more exalted conception of God. It is a Rise, not a Fall, that is revealed! And we cannot deny or ignore the record. It is there. It goes back to the cave-dweller of the hither verge of the Glacial Epoch. This earth record cannot be disputed: and it does not harmonize with the construction that has been given to the Scripture Record. Theological dogmas have to face this clash, with all its logical consequences. The time has gone by when a sneer will pass current as an answer to a scientific fact.

II. That one man and one woman, progenitors of the human race, sinned by disobeying a command of God. In so far as the simple statement of fact is concerned, the account might be passed over as inconsequential, the manner of the temptation to disobedience being dismissed as characteristic of the simple, infantile ideas of the childhood of a race. The narrative does not stand alone. Other races have in their folklore equally characteristic, and equally crude, accounts of the temptation of their far-off ancestors. That a man and a woman should, under temptation, be led into transgression, has in it nothing remarkable even. It is only a statement of what is daily taking place wherever men and women are born and are living upon earth. It is a

statement of fact broad as the world, and indisputable as human life. It needs no discussion, no proof. All admit it. It is not the account of the act itself which is of any especial importance: it is the theological deductions which have been drawn therefrom. What these deductions are, and the theological superstructure which has been reared thereon, will appear in the discussion which is to follow.

III. That the penalty announced beforehand, as a deterrent from disobedience, was to be death: "for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" [*"Muwth Tamuwth,"*—"a death shalt thou die": *Muwth,* a primitive word-root meaning, primarily, bodily death]. *Genesis II:17.*

That bodily death is not meant is shown in the fact that, by the record itself, the man and the woman did not that day die, but went out to long years of life upon earth, and to beget children who should grow up to take their place. Bodily death as an immediate penalty to the transgressor is, then, by the record itself, eliminated from the problem. Nor could it mean bodily death to be imposed as a new law of being upon the race of men who otherwise would have lived a deathless and unchanging life upon earth; for death, in the sense of destruction of a continuous physical identity upon earth, is by general law normal to all forms of physical life, from the rock crystal to the earth itself, which, under the working of well-known natural laws, is gradually parting with its planetary warmth, and must ultimately revolve in space a dead, inert mass, destitute of all life, whether vegetable or animal; and

where then would man's body, with its material needs, find the means to support a continued existence?

In the very nature and physical constitution of the Universe about us, death, in the sense of a destruction of material continuity of form, comes to all material things, whether vegetable, or brute, or man, or the material world they inhabit, or the solar system of which they are a part, or the farthest sun-star of space, with its train of satellites. The constitution of the material Universe shows that this form of death was already a part of the essential condition of man's bodily existence, and, as such, coeval with his creation, and consequently could not be imposed upon him as a new law of his being, or as a penalty.

Bodily death as a new law to the race is, then, by the record itself, and by the material laws of the Universe likewise, eliminated from the problem as an ultimate penalty for sin. What, then, could be meant by the wording of the record? As before stated, the Hebrew word is *Muwth,* "to die," and it is, as said, ordinarily made use of to indicate bodily death: but as in this especial case that meaning is not admissible, the primary root meaning of the word is necessarily rejected. What signification then could the word, as made use of in the text, really bear? The only other type of death of which we have cognizance, is what we are wont to term "spiritual death." But what do we mean by "spiritual death"? Not annihilation; for nowhere else in God's works do we find annihilation: the cases of so-called annihilation invariably proving to be only a more subtile change of form. We are forced

then to the conclusion that, by spiritual death, coming as a consequence of sin, could only be meant death to Good, involving separation from close or intimate spiritual union with God. This part of the conclusion is necessarily vague, as we have no means of investigation, or of knowing, beyond a certain point. It is the *unpassable* limitation of human inquiry. We have reached the human bounds of the knowable. We can only say, that it is in this sense of spiritual separation from God that Christian theology has been forced to accept the word. In the New Testament Record, with the more dogmatic theological structure to which it gives rise, a similar usage is to be noted in the words, Ζωη, "life"; θανατος, "death"; Νεκρος, "dead"—and in their derivatives.

There is a point of equity, however, to be considered here which is of no small importance. In the account as given in Genesis, absolute spiritual death is thus represented as the penalty for a single and first act of disobedience, committed by one who is utterly without experience as to the baneful consequences of the act, either through previous knowledge, or through observation, and who is, therefore, entirely without ability to forecast the disastrous results of his act. And the punishment is quick, sharp, and overwhelming. Even a human court is more mercifully considerate: for it always takes into view the inexperience of a first offense as a mitigating circumstance. The judgment and the penalty would seem to be so entirely disproportionate to the offense, that it is hard to reconcile them with divine patience, and kindliness, and justice, as portrayed elsewhere in the Scriptures. Indeed, they are at

total variance with the course God pursues at other times, and with His patient long-suffering with man in the after years: "And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." *Exodus XXXIV:6, 7.*

Nor does the Bible recognize as a fact that man, even that first man, is spiritually dead: but, instead, intensely alive spiritually. He, and his progeny, go out to build their rude stone altars to the God to whom they are theologically dead; and to make thank offerings, with which God is well pleased, and which He approvingly accepts. They go out to acknowledge Him in all their ways, and to be guided by Him: to walk with Him: to be taken up without seeing death; to be called by God, "My friend": to become "Priest of the Most High God": to enter into covenant with God: to commune with God, as one face to face: to live, and then to write, a Bible which for ages has been to mankind a treasure-house of Divine Truth, and a stronghold of morality—and yet, through all these ages, and while they were doing all this, they were, by our creeds, spiritually dead to God! It is to meet this manifest absurdity that the theological theory of a retroactive redemption through the blood sacrifice on Calvary was propounded. Read the Book of Genesis for the facts above given: and then read Romans XI and Hebrews XI as to the theory. And yet for this theory there is no adequate, or even reasonable, forecasting in the long ages before Calvary: only a few stray texts of ambigu-

ous wording, and of questionable applicability, which might be wrested into a vague support, and yet which might mean something else, and which were only claimed, as an after-thought, in support of a theory framed centuries after the texts were written. A reasonable mind may justly ask—Is this sufficient foundation for a doctrine which claims to settle the eternal destiny of countless millions of human souls through the long ages before Calvary? This language may seem to lack reverence in its frank plainness; yet it is spoken in no spirit of scoffing, but only that we may face the actuality as it must look to anyone who faces the question in a spirit unwarped by theoretical training.

What, then, is the picture as really given in the Scriptures? It is, as said, not a picture of spiritual death as a thing already incurred: but, instead, a picture of one intensely spiritually alive, and who has yet to incur the danger of spiritual death, which is to come only through repeated acts of disobedience to God's laws, and repeated yielding to the power of Evil. And the continued picture is of a slow, wilful dying to Good and to God: and all the while, God's Voice raised in warning: and ever a patient pleading with the sinner to turn back from his evil ways. It is in this thought that the Prophet cries, as the spokesman of a Divine Message: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" *Ezekiel XXXIII:11.*

Not dead, but dying, is the force of the text. The whole spirit of that Old Testament Record is one continuous cry to men not yet spiritually dead, but with the fatal lethargy of sin creeping over them. And the cry ever is: Arouse ye! Turn back before the lethargy deepens into spiritual death.

Let me recapitulate. How are we to reconcile all this with the doctrine that mankind was already spiritually dead through that first childhood, and childish, transgression of a far-off ancestor? And how are we, further, to reconcile the theory that the human race, by heredity, became dead to God in and from the time of that ancestral transgression, with the statement given in the record, that men went out at once to begin worshiping the God in whom, as dead men spiritually, they are supposed to have no further lot or part: and that God, well pleased, accepts their offerings, and looks with favor upon them? This is shown in the acceptable offering of Abel: it is implied in the rebuke to Cain: it is shown in the account of Enoch, and of Noah; of Abraham; of Melchizedek, "Priest of the Most High God"; and the Patriarchs, and the "Chosen People"; and on down through the whole history of the Old Testament Record. These are not men who are spiritually dead, and cut off from the divine life, but men who are keenly and sensitively alive to God in spirit, and who are in constant and intimate spiritual touch with Him. The close communion with God which runs through so much of that Old Hebræic Record is one of the priceless spiritual treasures of humanity. It has come down through the ages as an heirloom to the

hungry heart of man. And yet, by the creedal theory, these men were all dead to God! Does any rational man really believe this?

But, as said, it was to meet this logical difficulty that a theological theory of a retroactive ransom from spiritual death, through a blood sacrifice upon Calvary, ages after, has been framed. Yet the Record did not speak of this; nor does it give any tenable, or even probable, warrant for the assumption. It is purely a theological after-thought, framed to make tenable a creed.

IV. That by heredity the guilt and the penalty of the two primary offenders passed on to their children unborn, and on throughout all subsequent generations, although they had had no part, or possible will, in the original transgression. The inequity of this is too manifest to need comment. Such a claim would at once be thrown out of any court of justice in human affairs. No such transmitted guilt, or even attainder, is there recognized. In the barbarity of the dark ages such things were allowed: but no country claiming to be civilized will now for a moment recognize or tolerate such a procedure in its system of jurisprudence. So carefully are these points guarded in our own land, that the Constitution, in Section IX of Article I, expressly states, "No bill of attainder, or *ex post facto* law, shall be passed." Shall we assume that God would be less just than the man He has made? It would be at once to destroy the very basic idea of God as a Being of absolute and unswerving rectitude. While the power might be conceded, the right would require more careful consideration.

Right is right, and wrong is wrong, and justice is justice, whether in God or man. That might makes right, however, is not admitted in human actions. Can it be admitted in divine? And does such a claim honor God? Does it not, on the contrary, put the deepest dishonor upon Him? The old Prophet of Israel saw more clearly than this: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." *Ezekiel XVIII:20.*

The same just law of equity had been before announced in the Sinaitic Code: "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." *Deuteronomy XXIV:16.*

Whence, then, have come the theological doctrines, and the Church creeds, of sin-guilt, and a death penalty, falling by inheritance to each one born of woman, through heredity from an original ancestral transgressor? There is no hinting even of such a doctrine in the original account in Genesis. The penalty is there spoken of as a purely personal and individual matter, pertaining to the one generation alone. Nor is it to be found in the revelations which cluster about Sinai, the portion of the Old Covenant Record which makes especial claim to divine authorization. Neither does Jesus in his teachings set forth the doctrine. We can hardly reconcile such an absolute silence upon the part of the divinely authorized portions of both Old and New Testaments concerning this doctrine with its claim to divine origin, and especially in view of its vital impor-

tance, if true, as the very foundation-stone of so much of the theological structure which the creeds have based thereon. We should surely, and with just reason, in a matter of such vital importance, look to find somewhere in the record the "Thus saith the Lord!" or that other, "But I say unto you." It is only when we turn from these divinely authoritative portions of both Old and New Testaments away to the man-made portions which in the after years gathered about them, that we begin to find texts which may be made to support the doctrine: in the Old Testament scarcely at all: in the New, somewhat more, but especially as we come to the Epistles of Paul, the theological controversialist and Oriental fatalist. The doctrine would seem to have been the product of man's theological after-thought, and to have been formulated and elaborated to explain the theory of the death upon Calvary as a propitiatory sacrifice to reconcile God to man.

That the fruitage of the theory has been spiritually healthful, may well be questioned, in view of the centuries of discord to which it has led, and the torn and rent ranks of Christianity in its conflict with world-evil. Forced by the instinctive protest of the human sense of justice, the doctrine as a polemic has been largely sublimated into that of an inherited fallen nature, not in itself actual guilt, but only an inborn and inescapable proneness to evil, coming as a consequence from that one original transgression, and passing on by an inescapable heredity to weight down the innocent descendants of the original offenders throughout all generations. But the divinely authoritative portions of the

record do not speak even of this, nor does the narrative of the Fall as given in Genesis. It is another case of reading into the record a meaning to support an after-theory. Nor would the inherent injustice be any the less. Possibly no more insidious and far-reaching wrong can be done to a human conscience than the attempt to justify laws and acts attributed to God, and yet which the human sense of right and wrong instinctively condemns as inequitable and unjust. It is a perversion of the whole moral sense. This granted, and no excesses of religious cruelty or persecution are beyond palliation or excuse. The very foundations of moral sense are shifted. And further, to place before a human soul an inequitable, and therefore unbelievable, creed and say, "Believe!" is a wrong scarcely less disastrous to the spiritual sense.

The saving thought, however, after all, is that the world really does not believe it and probably never has. When the question is asked of a human mind, "Why do you believe?" the answer has at last to be virtually this —"Because that which I believe appears to me to be believable." No other basis of actual belief is possible to a reasoning mind: and this doctrine of the Fall, and of guilt by heredity, is not believable, for it contravenes all ideas of justice, and hence is incompatible with that equity which must be an essential and inseparable characteristic of the divine nature. "And there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Savior." *Isaiah XIV:21.*

The doctrines of Eden, and the Fall, are now practically discarded by the Christian Church. No thought-

ful pulpit preaches them in the face of the scientific investigations as to the origin and evolution of man upon earth. The evidence, not of a Fall, and a Retrogression, but of an origin in, and a gradual Rise from, primeval savagery is too overwhelming. Yet upon this premise of Eden and the Fall is based the whole Pauline system of redemption to which the Church has fallen heir. It is a case of the logical inconsistency of rejected premises, but the retention of the conclusions deduced therefrom and based thereon.

Yet there is another, and this, likewise, a saving thought. Have we misread the meaning of the old Edenic idyl; and is it possibly, after all, only an allegorical picture of the innocent child-life of all ages: and is that primitive myth only a clearer vision of the soul-testing of every human life? And is the eating of the fruit of the "Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil" only the first taste by the child-soul of the moral possibilities which lie before it? And the "Fall"—is it the lapse of the pure child-soul into sin? This might be believable: and no antiquarian research could confute. But with this view, as said, would disappear the whole doctrine of the "Fall," and the "Transmitted Guilt," and of the "Transmitted Fallen Nature." It was in the spirit of this broader equity that the prophet Ezekiel spoke when, as the mouthpiece of God, he exclaimed: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." And it is just. But there is a corollary: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." *Ezekiel XVIII:20.*

Was it so that Cain died?—not because of Adam, but because of Cain?

### *The Theory of a Ransom From the Racial Spiritual Death of the Fall*

It is essential to clearness of thought that a distinction should be observed between two entirely different topics which are often confounded with each other:

I. The theoretical Race Fall, and consequent racial spiritual death because of, and through, the transgression of the first man and the first woman: this Fall and racial spiritual death passing on by heredity to all their descendants.

II. The transgression of the individual soul which constitutes personal sin.

The first of these topics, and the theoretical ransom from racial spiritual death, will be taken up in this chapter. The second will follow in the chapter, "The Theory of a Blood Atonement for Sin."

In Judæo-Christianity the theory of a ransom from the suppositious racial spiritual death, as evolved from the Scriptures, is briefly as follows—and I make use of the word evolved hesitatingly, for it is a question how far the conclusions which have been drawn are justified, by the premises: That in order to save man from the death penalty for his transgression of God's law, and yet to enable God to keep His word inviolate, another dies for man as a substitute: and that in some unexplained and incomprehensible way, the one who thus died in man's stead was God Himself. This idea

had apparently little, if any, recognition in Judæism. There was in Judæism the idea of a blood sacrifice for cleansing from sin. It came with the Jewish people from the exile in Egypt, and was common to most of the religions of antiquity. In Christianity, as the years went by, the thought of blood sacrifice as the sole cleansing from transgression began to take definite shape as the central and basic dogma of its creeds, and especially as a growing tendency to theological abstractions began to manifest itself in the after-ages of the Church. There are, however, some serious and apparently insurmountable objections to the doctrine as it has been elaborated:

I. Such death by a substitute is not provided for in the original decree, nor would it fulfil the terms of that decree. The decree was, "In the day thou eatest thereof *thou* shalt surely die." *Genesis II:17.*

Civilized human law does not recognize the permissibility of a substitute to bear the penalty in case of an infraction of its mandates. Even though the overpowering love of a parent's heart may prompt the act of self-sacrifice, and beautiful as the spirit of devotion may be, still the terms of the law are not thus legally met, and no court could allow it. Law must mean what it says, or it ceases to be law. But in this case not only the Divine Law, but the Divine Word as well, would be at stake: for the claim carries with it, in the execution, a subterfuge which it is difficult to reconcile with the idea of divine rectitude. Shall not God keep His Word in the matter of enforcing His laws? "God is not a man, that he should lie: neither the son of a man that he

should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" *Numbers XXIII:19.*

That God might forgive, and restore man again to spiritual life with Himself, has in it nothing unbelievable, for it is not said, nor even implied, that the banishment from Himself was to be irrevocable: but that God should be forced to make use of a subterfuge to save the letter of His own Word is a supposition which we can hardly reconcile with our idea of Him as a being of perfect prescience: nor, as said, can we reconcile a willingness upon His part so to do, with the idea of a divine rectitude.

II. The penalty, as already shown, could only have been spiritual death. But the death upon the cross was a bodily death: and bodily death is not spiritual death. Both are failures to meet the terms of the law: and as such are evasions of the prescribed penalty. The law has thus not been fulfilled.

Could God take upon Himself the spiritual death as a substitute for man, and yet remain God? As spiritual death is separation from God, this supposition would require that God should undergo separation from His own divine Life—that is, separation from His own Personality. This is inconceivable. It would involve overthrow of the very idea of being. And yet anything short of this would not be compliance with the terms of the decree.

The doctrine of a ransom for man from spiritual death through divine substitution, therefore, when thus traced to its ultimate bearings, not only does not fulfil

the terms of the original law as laid down in the record, but, further, cannot be made to harmonize with the idea of a continuous and undivided identity of personality in God as a divine being. The doctrine cannot consequently be classed as logically reasonable and, therefore, believable. We are again brought face to face with an impasse in our creedal dogmas.

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This subject is further elaborated in the next chapter under the heading, "The Theory of a Blood Atonement for Sin."

# VI

## THE THEORY OF A BLOOD ATONEMENT FOR SIN

IT IS to be noted, in the consideration of a blood atonement as an expiation for sin-guilt, that we are dealing with a doctrine held by Christianity alone. All of the other great religions of the earth have outgrown it, if they ever held it. Even Judæism has discarded the doctrine, to which Christianity has fallen heir from the dead Temple service of nineteen centuries ago: largely through the teachings of Saul of Tarsos, disciple of Gamaliel, "A Pharisee of the Pharisees."

The theory of an atonement for sin is based upon the double idea of:

I. An offended deity who is in some way to be placated.

II. That sin may be paid for, as in a commercial transaction.

It is the human view of supernaturally spiritual things. It is religion reduced to a commercial basis. This language may seem to be almost irreverent, but it is not so intended. It is only an attempt to express in plain, simple words what are the real facts in the case. Most religions, probably all primarily, are based upon these ideas. Possibly Islam is freer from this commercial aspect than any of the others. Christianity, especially in its hymnology, is loaded down with it. In

Judæism this idea found expression in the offerings made under the Levitical code as an expiation for sin. In this, the transgressor brought to the priest his offering, whether of flesh, or of first fruits, or of meal, or of oil, with a portion of which the priest made expiatory sacrifice, the remainder being kept for the support of the Temple service. And the offering must be of the best. No inferior quality, no animal with a blemish, would suffice. It was something of a commercial value given: something of a spiritual value received in return. That this purely commercial aspect of the transaction was the commonly accepted one among the Hebrew people is shown in the indignant rebuke of the Prophet when, filled with the spirit of divine remonstrance, he cried aloud as the mouthpiece of Jehovah: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring me no more oblations: wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings before mine eyes: cease to do evil: learn to do well: seek judgment—[*mishpat,* "justice"]: relieve the oppressed: judge the fatherless: plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." *Isaiah I:11, 13, 18.*

There was in Judæism, however, a well-marked conflict between the commercial and the spiritual

phases of the doctrine of an atonement for sin. It permeates the whole of the Old Covenant Record. It would seem to be a conflict between the low heathen view of atonement as a purely commercial transaction, and a higher, more spiritual view which was possibly more strictly Hebræic in origin. And, that Hebræism in its practical workings evoluted into a compromise and compound of these radically distinct religious concepts of sin and its atonement, is everywhere manifest. Yet it was not harmony. In the very nature of things it could not be. The battle of conflicting theories was ever on. David, with an aroused conscience, and a clearer spiritual perception, turns from the sacrificial sin offerings of the Levitical Code, and cries out of the agony of his transgression: "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." *Psalm LI:16, 17.*

It is the same commercial spirit, the thought that sin may be paid for, that Jesus so sternly rebuked when with scourge of cords he drove out from the Temple the money-changers, and the sellers of doves, marted for sacrificial purposes, saying: "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." *John II:15, 16.* This commercial aspect of an atonement has, as a general thing, grown with the growth of ecclesiasticism, and its attendant necessity for large and regular income for the support of the Church service. It was so with Hebræism: it has been so, possibly to less degree, with Christianity. In Hebræism

the thought of a blood atonement for sin reached a stage of excess such that, as shown in the dedication of the Temple under Solomon, the House of God became a mere shambles, revolting in the grossness of its service, and in its wanton disregard for animal life. See *I Kings, VIII:5 and 63, 64.*

The indignant protest against the folly of all this, as voiced in the passionate cry of the old Prophets, is an attempt apparently to turn Israel back to the purer, saner faith of the patriarchal life. How much of this riot of blood was original with the Hebrew people, and how much was brought from Egypt, or how much might have been borrowed from the surrounding heathenism, is now difficult to say. But we know that the idea of a blood atonement for sin, with its attendant temple sacrifice, was common to the peoples about them. The Old Testament bears witness to this, as well as the records of profane history, and the testimony of the carven monuments. And it has left a legacy to Christianity, more especially as expressed in its hymnology, the spiritual healthfulness of which may be well questioned.

The successive steps of the evolution of this commercial aspect of an atonement for sin are clearly traceable in Judæism. We have first a picture of the purer, primitive Patriarchal Faith of the old tent-life out under the stars, with each man the priest of his own household; and the kindly-spirited free-will offerings upon the rude altar of stone, not under a roof, but out in the Open. And in it we find no trace of the idea of an atonement for sin. It is, so far as the record gives indi-

cation, sometimes simply as a thank-offering from grateful hearts; sometimes purely a devotional act of worship; at others, the visible sign and seal of a covenant with God. There is no trace, no clear hinting even, of a looking forward to anything more formal than this simple family worship, in the spiritual relationship of man with God. It was still the close personal touch of a child with its parent. Herein lies the ever-fresh charm of that old tent-life to a weary world. Sin, repentance, forgiveness, all were there: but the forgiveness was still the direct, kindly act of a father, with no apparent thought of a price to be paid. It was still the child, unafraid, looking up into the face of the father.

The return from the long sojourn in Egypt shows, however, a radical change in the whole spiritual life of the people. For a number of generations they have been in close touch with the elaborately organized ecclesiasticism of an old and dominant civilization, with its magnificent temples, its powerful priesthood, its tithes, and its formal and elaborate rituals, and with a creed which was the product of long ages of the religious thought of the race. The direct touch with God became lost. The old simple life of the tent, and the Open, fades to a dream: until Moses says, "When I tell them that the God of their fathers hath sent me, they will ask, What is his name?" The taskmaster, and his lash, and his religion, with its rituals and its blood sacrifices, begin to dominate the race. And it is in the wilderness, but shortly after the escape from Egypt, that their own elaborate ritualistic ecclesiasticism begins to take shape; and with it the atonement for sin

through compensatory offering makes its appearance. Yet the Paschal Lamb was not a sacrifice for sin, but only a memorial of the deliverance from the bondage in Egypt; and the Passover Feast, antetype of the Christian Sacrament of the Last Supper, was so ordained, and so observed: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations." "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." *Exodus XII: 14, and 26, 27.*

That the change in the thought of the Paschal Lamb as a memorial of the racial deliverance in Egypt, to it as a sacrifice made as an expiation for sin, is a perversion, and an unwarranted perversion, of the purpose of its original institution as a memorial, is shown by the quotation just given. How much of the completed ecclesiastical system of the Jews dates from the forty years of the desert life, how much is an after development, simply taking date as a whole from the Sinaitic inception, is probably a question which may always remain unsettled: but that Judæism as a completed ecclesiastical system dates, entire, from the desert years, is not proven. It is not the history of similar ecclesiasticisms elsewhere in the religions of mankind: certainly not in the elaborate structure of creeds and service of the type of Christianity which has grown up through the ages about the simple teachings of Jesus of Naz-

areth. It is more probable that the Judæism of the Old Testament, like the Christianity of the New, was a gradual evolution.

The pristine Patriarchal Faith of early Hebræism seems to have been the pure theism which is common to many primitive peoples. Its type is well shown in the Book of Job, that strangely vivid drama of God's ways with man. We have another well-marked instance of primitive theism in the American Indian, with his simple looking-up to The Great Spirit, and his kindly offerings as to a father. But as the ages pass on we begin to find in Hebræism evidence of a double concept of the relationship between man and God, and a steadily growing conflict between the two: The kindly but firm All-Father, with His law of punishment for sin; yet who will freely extend forgiveness to the repentant sinner: but again, the concept of an angry God, who may only be induced to grant forgiveness for sin through the offices of a Mediator, and through the offering of an expiatory sacrifice; and with this second concept comes the idea of blood-guilt and blood atonement. The first concept is that of the purer, primitive faith. The second is apparently the after-thought of a lower and more debased spiritual life, and is evidence of the growing influence of a priesthood. It would seem to be the impress of the debased, cruel religions of Egypt, and of the idolatrous races about them, upon the earlier, simpler, more kindly faith of the old Patriarchal life of Judæa. Rameses II, of the time of the Captivity, in a plea for the favor of his deity, the Sun-God, Amun, says: "I have sacrificed to thee thirty thou-

sands of oxen, with all the scent-bearing herbs and choicest perfumes." And it is as priest-king that he speaks.

Yet Judæism did not entirely assent to this newer doctrine. In fact, it never fully accepted it. The prophecies are one long-continued protest against this commercial aspect of a blood atonement for sin. Isaiah, as spokesman for the Lord, cries out in that mighty outburst of repudiation as before quoted: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with: it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to hear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. . . . Wash you: make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes: cease to do evil: learn to do well: seek judgment—[*mishpat,* "justice"]: relieve the oppressed: judge the fatherless: plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." *Isaiah I:11, 13, 18.*

Jeremiah rebukes Israel for the blood sacrifice, and calls back to the truer way: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Chapter VII:22, 23. Ezekiel points out God's standard of judgment—Chapter XVIII—Amos adds to the warning—Chapter V:21, 24. Micah recalls to the plain path—Chapter V:8. And again, God's Voice in terms of lofty scorn: "Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove—[*yakah,* "justify"]—thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, continually before me. I will take no bullocks out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." *Psalm L:7, 15.*

And Jesus confirms it all in that stern behest to the Pharisees: "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." *Matthew IX:13; Hosea VI:6.*

This conflict over the concept of a blood atonement for sin passes on into the New Dispensation. There is

little trace of the doctrine in the words of Jesus, which in spirit are more as the simple faith of the old Patriarchal days. The prodigal son, and the forgiving father, are typical of his teachings. It is forgiveness without compensation, just as an earthly father forgives, willingly and gladly, the erring but repentant son.

But upon these simple teachings was grafted, or foisted, upon Christianity that concept of the decadent Judæistic faith, the blood sacrifice as an atonement for sin. And it is Paul, the trained pupil of Judæic ritualism, who is head and front of the new movement, and who strives to show a logical continuity of succession from the Old to the New. That in so doing he rendered a good service to the simple, trusting faith taught by Jesus, may be questioned.

In Judæism, whatever the original theory of the expiatory nature of sacrifice may have been, and of this we have no means of definitely knowing, practically among the great mass of the people the purely commercial phase would seem to have prevailed. In Christianity, while this commercial phase of the theory has prevailed, and has entered largely into the creeds, these additional phases are to be noted, namely:

I. That the atonement for man has been made by the blood of a human sacrifice, and not by the blood of beasts.

II. That the atoning price has been paid for man by a substitute.

III. That by turning back to God in repentance for sin, and by acceptance through faith of this substi-

tuted sacrifice, everyone so repenting, and so exercising faith in the expiatory efficacy of the substitution, is thereupon forgiven by God for his transgression, and is thereby saved from the penalty.

IV. That only by this indirect process may pardon for transgression be secured, and a human soul be saved from the penalty of spiritual death. See *Acts IV:11 and 12.*

V. That all direct approach to God is barred to the repentant sinner, as he can only obtain a hearing through, and because of, the intermediary who is put to death as a substitute.

VI. That this is human sacrifice, against which the Old Covenant is sternly set, denouncing it as an abomination of the heathen, and as an offense to God.

VII. That even the commemorative rite observed, and as explained in, a large portion of the Christian Church, is a direct violation of the Old Covenant prohibition of the partaking of blood: and this, by the wording of the rite, is not even the blood of beasts, but human blood.

These statements may seem harsh: they may even seem, in the light of Church creeds and Church observances, to be almost irreverent; but they are not so intended. They are, on the contrary, an essential and an unavoidable part, and a legitimate and just part, of the investigation as to how far the type of the Christian religion which we have built up, in all these centuries of creed-framing, is justified by its original Judæo-Christian foundations.

Who and what this penal substitute for man was, as formulated in Christian creeds, has been taken up in the chapter, "The Theory of a Fall, and the Penalty," and will be considered again in the chapter, "Who, and What, was Jesus?" It is the extent to which the possibility and the probability of such an atonement by proxy has been assented to by the Christian world, that is now before us. That the probability of such a substitutional offering having been made for man, the possibility even that such a payment by proxy could be made, has received the assent of all Christians, now, or from the beginning, the open facts of history undeniably disprove. The churches of the first three centuries after Christ were rent and torn over the question, as they were also over the nature of the personality of Jesus, and of his relationship to God. It is equally manifest that now, after nineteen centuries of investigation and discussion and argument, and after the countless volumes written for and against the various conflicting theories, the views of the churches are still as widely apart as ever.

That those who did not accept what are ordinarily spoken of as the orthodox teachings upon these points then, and those who reject them now, are to be classed as ignorant, or perverse, cannot be claimed. They are now our neighbors, people of intelligence, of good, clean, moral lives, of irreproachable habits, who take active part in the moral reforms of the world, who believe in God, who pray to Him, who meet in public worship of Him in formal church organization, whom we find to be amenable to reason and open to conviction

upon all topics which we may discuss with them, and who are evidently just as honest and sincere in their belief as ourselves. And even within the ranks of those who accept and maintain the doctrine of a vicarious atonement for sin, we find views as to the nature and the manner of the atonement for sin so divergent, so antagonistic even, and so filled with the spirit of controversy, that those who profess them cannot affiliate with each other in church fellowship.

What, then, is the conclusion which we must draw from all this, under the rules laid down as to the common grounds for a reasonable faith? Can it be other than this?—That the question of an atonement for sin, its nature, its probability, its possibility even, is not one of the vital questions of religion; and that it may wisely and safely be left to God as a point which, for some reason, He has not seen fit to make clear. Any other conclusion would be to hold God guilty of a gross injustice to man's soul in basing the possibility of his salvation upon the acceptance of dogmas which the minds of many cannot logically accept, when God has made them mentally incapable of such acceptance. We have here reached the *reductio ad absurdum:* for God, to be God, must be just.

The vital point is manifestly the fact of a forgiveness based upon repentance for the wrong done: and upon this all men agree. To all there is the common idea of one Supreme Ruler of the Universe, Who is All-Father to all the many races of men: Who wishes them well: Who watches over them: and Who has established a Law of Right and Wrong: and disobedi-

ence to Whose beneficent laws is sin. And all have caught the same idea—That as an earthly father forgives a repentant child for his wrong-doing, so the All-Father will forgive His children if they repent and ask forgiveness. This simple idea is the basis of all religions. Without it, they would have no reason to exist. It is the great basic idea which Jesus himself taught in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Upon this basis Christians stand side-by-side with the other religions of the world, and may have fellowship with them: the fact of forgiveness, not the manner of it, is the vital point: on this point all religions agree—stand related as one.

There are some additional facts which, while not directly a portion of the foregoing argument, have still a bearing upon the inherent probability or improbability of the doctrine of the blood atonement for sin, as ordinarily set forth. The theory of the atonement, as formulated in Christian theology, implies a change and an addition to the law after the law has been promulgated, and the offense committed, and the making of this addition retroactive in its application. This, as stated in a previous chapter, is a procedure not recognized as legitimate or allowable in human criminal law. And it would further carry with it the inescapable implication that God was forced to thus correct a defect and resultant failure in His law as at first promulgated: and would further imply that God was forced to correct this failure in order to save the man He had made; and would thus unavoidably carry the still further, and also inescapable, implication that, in the framing of the law, God had made an error of omission, or else of

prevision. All of these implications are wholly incompatible with those attributes of omniscience and omnipotence which we are wont to ascribe to God as essential and inseparable constituents of the divine nature.

There is also a strangely discordant fact which must be taken into consideration in weighing the ordinary theory of blood atonement for sin through the sacrifice on Calvary, namely: In order to effect that sacrifice, humanity must commit sin. The crucifying necessitates a crucifier. By the theory, humanity, in order to obtain pardon for its sins, must commit the additional, and heinous, sin of murder. It does not matter what the immediate and impelling motive of the actors: the fact of the act as an essential part of a foreseen and foreordained plan remains the same. Man becomes only the blind tool of a higher power. It is doing evil that good may come. And how about those who, in order to give to humanity a way of escape from sin, must commit sin? And how about the words of seemingly hopeless foredooming of the one who only betrays, and thus makes possible the already foreordained sacrifice: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born." *Matthew XXVI:24.* Yet it is, as said, an essential preliminary to the sacrifice: and unless he does it, humanity can have no hope. Has the manifest injustice and inconsistency of it all ever occurred to us? The theory should lift these men to the pinnacle of foreordained, foredoomed martyrs for the salvation of man. There is no escape from these conclusions. They are there. How can we reconcile the theory with the idea of a just God? What is wrong—the theory, or God?

And humanity has a right to ask these questions, and to press for an answer. It has right to a reasonable faith in the all-pervading justice of its God. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" *Genesis XXVIII:25.*

Let me speak a personal word. With the passing of the years the scene upon Calvary has seemed less and less as a great central fact in the spiritual plan of a universe, but more and more as only an episode in the spiritual drama of one small planet, one only of God's worlds. Touching, dramatically tender, but still only a passing episode, and apparently having to do with the religious beliefs of only a portion of the human race. The thought of broad, general law as ruling alike in the spiritual life of all worlds, and of all created beings, through all the countless cycles of eternity, and that changes not: this is the thought that ever grows upon me: while the thought of special interpositions as steadily fades away. And in it all, the concept of God broadens out and grows greater. I seem to have come out upon a higher plane, and to have found a greater God. And with this change I can realize that I have drawn nearer to Him: not farther away. And with it has also come a spiritual exaltation which, before, I had only dimly apprehended. I feel that I am treading upon the borders of God's land: and an unspeakable gladness comes to me. Is it just to God, is it just to my own soul, that I should not speak? Must humanity ever stand spiritually helpless, and bewildered, and dumb, in the presence of the creeds it has made?

*Domine, ad Te levabo oculos meos!*

## The Cry of the Wildered Folk

### I

He did not know: the way seemed fair to him.
He was not strong: but only flesh and blood,
Just as the common folk who go astray
And hurt themselves, and cry out in their pain.
He was not wise: no Doctor of the Law
With finger on his forehead, and the look,
The far-off, world-lost, pondering, absent look
Of one deep-delved in thought of ways divine.

He slipped and stumbled, fell; and prone along
The rushing highway, in the crowd of men,
Was trampled on, and hurt, and pushed aside.
And he had sin: for this he did repent:
But sinned again; for he was weak, and fell.

Then thought came back of home, and youth, and love,
And that old prayer beside the mother's knee,
And him, that other prodigal of long ago:
And he, too, humbly said with broken heart,
I will go back! Maybe my father's house
Is open still.

And did he have to pay?
Was mercy to be purchased: and was price
Set on the father's love? And was there need
Of one to go between, and plead for him,
And turn the father's wrath, and ransom pay,
And bear the wrath instead?

But what of him,
The one the Master spake of, him who sat
Through the long, weary days, who sat and watched
The dusty, winding roadway down the plain
For one, the prodigal, who might come back:
And seeing, ran to meet him? It was love—
But only human love: remember this—
And fell upon his neck, and kissed him, and cried out,
"My son, my long-lost son, is come again!"

And did the son, that erring son, pay aught
To purchase back a father's love, and win
Again the home? What price was in his hand?
Naked, and poor, and broken, he had naught
Wherewith to pay: his friends, his money gone:
And none paid for him. Only did he say,
"Father, forgive! Naked and poor I come.
I am not worthy. Make me even as those
Who serve for hire." But, oh, the longing look
That sought the father's face!

And he, and he,
The father, with no thought of pay, or price,
Folded his arms about him, and in love
That knew no purchase price, cried out again,
"My son, my long-lost son, is come again!"

And He, the Master, told it. And could God,
The God Whose heart is love, could He do less?
Have we misread the marvel of it all?

Or, having read, have we been blind to see:
And so misjudged the great, warm, loving heart
Of Him, All-Father: and so turned away?

Have we done wrong to God: and have we failed
To know Him as He is? Have we misjudged
The patient, kindly, waiting heart of Him,
And looked for wrath, when there was only love:
And deemed some sacrifice must come between,
Some blood atonement, to win back that love?
Have tangled creeds, and words of broken law,
And pardon to be purchased by some price,
Some blood-price, paid by other, it may be—
Have these things kept us from the face of God,
The one All-Father, and done wrong to Him?

For, oh, the world-heart, that sore, troubled heart,
Sick with its sin, is longing for the home,
And old-time voice, "My son is come again!"
But it must be the Father. No one else
Can speak for Him; or give the wanderer peace.

## II

She fell: for she was only woman-kind:
And woman trusts; and, trusting, is betrayed.
And then she strayed: the path for tender feet
Was hard to tread, the path that backward leads
To good and God. She was not strong enough:
And no hand helped her. So she slipped, and slipped,
Until the way seemed closed, and God was gone.

But He? . . The shepherd watching looked and knew
One sheep was gone, one sheep, one wildered sheep,
Gone in the storm and darkness. And with cloak,
The shaggy shepherd-cloak, pulled close about,
Breasted the icy blast to save that one.
'Twas only one: and in the sheltered fold
Were many others: only one—but ONE:
And he the shepherd: and on him the care
That no harm come, and none should go astray.
And gathering up the lost one in the folds
Of shepherd-cloak, close to his strong, warm breast,
He brought the lost sheep, chilled, and near to death,
Back to the fold, and back to life again.

Only a shepherd on the Syrian plain;
And gathering darkness, and the winter night,
And biting storm; and one lost sheep; and he
Of untaught ways, and rude, maybe, of speech,
And knowing little of the great, broad world
Of men about him: yet the story told
Of him, the shepherd, and his tender care
For one lost sheep. This tale the Master told.
And God?—Could God do less for His lost sheep?
God, Shepherd of the straying, wildered ones
Out in the storm and darkness, where lost souls
Are wandering helpless?

Yes! maybe the fault
Was theirs, and theirs the brand of blame, the sin.
But, oh, they did not know! They did not know!
The way seemed pleasant: but the winter storm,
That smouldered in the air, they could not see.

The Master told: and it was long ago.
But still the storm, and still the straying sheep,
And still the piteous cry.

Will He not hear,
The Shepherd of the sheep that are astray?
Would He do less than man? It could not be!
God of the sheep-fold, oh, it could not be!

And it was long ago—so long ago!
God of the sheep-fold, long, so long ago!
And He is gone, the One Who told the tale.
But, oh, the wildered folk! And, oh, the cry
Of sad, lost souls, out in the dark alone.

*Peccavi! Peccavi! Miserere mei, Pater!*

# VII

## THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

THE doctrine of the Trinity, briefly stated, is as follows: That in the Godhead there are three distinct persons: having each his own separate and distinctive name: having each his own separate and distinctive work: constituting, so far as reason can conceive, three separate and distinct entities: and recognizing, as between themselves in their intercourse with each other, this distinction of entity: and yet in some strangely incomprehensible way that these three are one in being, one entity.

Polytheism is comprehensible, and might be believable under the laws of reason.

Monotheism is, in like manner, comprehensible, and within the realm of believable things, as not inconsistent with reason.

But that three entities may be one while yet three, that one entity may be three entities while yet one entity, is not simply incomprehensible: it is unthinkable and unbelievable: and it is thus unthinkable, and unbelievable, because it is in direct contravention of the very basic laws of being, and hence of reason. Under the laws of being, and of reason, it is simply a logical impossibility. It controverts and subverts the indispensable basis of what we call sanity. It involves a self-contradiction which is wholly incompatible with

the essential nature of existence. It is saying that a thing can be, and yet not be, at the same moment of time. With such a condition admitted as a possibility the mind has nowhere to rest; nothing which it can accept as fixed: for it is the blotting out of actuality; law is gone: chaos is come and rules supreme. And this resultant is tacitly admitted and given recognition in the ground taken theologically that the doctrine of the Trinity is to be accepted on faith alone, as being manifestly in direct contravention of the laws of reason, and hence impossible of explanation, and unthinkable. And yet the whole tenor and spirit of the Scriptures is a divine appeal to human reason: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," is the message which the prophet brings as spokesman for Jehovah to man. *Isaiah I:18.*

"But," it is said, "the world does not understand the doctrine of the Trinity." That is not the difficulty. The difficulty is, that the world does understand. It understands only too clearly for belief; for it has faced, and realized, the elemental and logical impossibility, and is forced either to reject the dogma, or else to bid farewell to reason. And yet God, the All-Maker, made reason in man. The attempt to believe the logically impossible is not mental soundness. This way insanity lies. It is only by refusing to think, and making a meaningless profession of belief, that the mind can escape the unsettling. And this is not faith. It is soul betrayal, and falsehood.

"But," cries some devout soul, "cannot God make the impossible to be possible?" No! God, as the maker

of law, must be limited by His own Law. Even divine power cannot make the self-contradictory possible.

The objection does not lie in the fact that the doctrine is incomprehensible. Many things are incomprehensible which are yet not illogical. The real objection lies in the fact that the doctrine is self-contradictory. A thing cannot be one and yet three, or three and yet one. It is a logical impossibility.

*Whence has the Doctrine of the Trinity Sprung?*

There is nothing in the Old Testament Record to even foreshadow it. On the contrary, the unity of the personality of God is ever emphasized and dwelt upon. "Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else," is the strong, clear statement of the Old Covenant Record: and from this it never varies. *Deuteronomy IV:39.* And again:— "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." *Deuteronomy VI:4.*

Isaiah, the poet-prophet of Israel, returns again and again to this thought: "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God: I know not any." *Isaiah XLIV:8.* "I am the Lord, there is none else: there is no God beside me." *XLV:5 and 18.* "And there is no God else beside me: a just God and a Savior: there is none else beside me." *XLV:21.* "And all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Savior, and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob." *XLIX:26.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is purely of New Testament origin. Yet the words of Jesus himself neither

formulate the doctrine of identity of persons in the Trinity as set forth in the creeds, nor do they clearly substantiate it. It is solely an inference, and forced: for his own words give an explanation of the sense in which he makes use of the phrases that express the thought of oneness with God; and this sense is not oneness of person, but oneness in spirit. His last prayer with his disciples clearly shows this: "That they—[his followers]—all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." *John XVII:21.* The measure of men with each other is the measure here given of man with Jesus and the Father, and as the measure of the relationship of Jesus himself with the Father.

There is a scene in the life of Jesus which throws a clear light upon his own views as to the nature of the Godhead; and it will be noted that it is to the One God of the Old Covenant that he goes back: "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. . . . And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifice. . . . And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." *Mark XII: 28, 34.*

As the texts and the facts which bear most conclusively upon the question of the Trinity will be given under the heading, "Who, and What, was He?" to avoid repetition they are not taken up here. Only the general conclusions are now given. The mainstay of the doctrine as formulated in the creeds has been, however, not the words of Jesus, himself, but the words found in I John, V:7 of the King James Version, and this text has been condemned as spurious and omitted from the Revised Version of the Bible. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." *I John, V:7.* It may have been interpolated there at the time of the great Trinitarian controversy in the fourth century after Jesus. The rejection of this text leaves Christianity in the strangely illogical position of retaining the conclusion, while rejecting the premise upon which that conclusion is mainly based.

The doctrine of the Trinity, as now formulated in our creeds, seems to have been no settled part of the belief of the primitive Christian Church. If the matter came up at all, it would seem to have been put aside as a *res non adjudicata.* It was not until the Fourth Century that the Church as a collective body formally took

it up for ecclesiastical action. Whatever beliefs upon the question may, or may not, have existed among Christians before that time, would seem to have been left to the separate congregations, or to the individual conscience. The question of the Trinity, which resolves itself primarily into the question of the exact nature of the personality of Jesus, and secondarily into that of the Holy Spirit, gradually assumed a growing prominence as the theologies sprang up; and the churches were rent and torn by the controversy. The resultant clashing and disorder became so great that in the year 325 A.D., a delegated Council of the churches was called by the Emperor Constantine at Nikaia to pass upon this and some other disturbing questions of belief and polity. It is apparently the first time the churches assumed authority to settle by united official action, and through ballot, the question of a formal and mandatory creed. After a stormy session, and amid scenes of tumult and violence in the Council itself, articles upon the personality and nature of Jesus, as now held by the creeds, were adopted, and those who dissented were driven out with the anathema of the Church pronounced upon them. . . . It was a Duality, however, and not a Trinity, which was voted; as the question of the Holy Spirit as one of the Godhead was not formulated and finally adopted by vote until the General Council at Constantinople, A.D. 381.

The opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity was, however, strong: a large minority of the churches opposing it as being a return to the polytheism of the old heathen days. A hundred years of persecution, of vio-

lence, of bloodshed and of martyrdom over the conflicting points of belief followed this formal Church action; sometimes the Trinitarians, sometimes the Unitarians, being in the ascendency, and controlling the Church, and alternately anathematizing each other, and each party numbering bishops and leading Church officials within its ranks, until at last, with the strong arm of the civil power assisting, open dissent was crushed, and the Church, as an organization, stood committed to the doctrine of a Godhead of three coeval and coequal personalities who, in their relationship to each other, were three separate and distinct entities, and yet who were at the same time only one entity.

The fifteen centuries of theological discussion which have followed, and libraries which have been written upon the doctrine, have made it no clearer, no more thinkable, no less a violence to human reason, than it was the day it was voted. It still stands apart and alone, an anomaly in human faith. The theology of Christianity in its evolution has assumed too much the attitude of forcing the facts to agree with a theory, rather than making the theory conform to the facts.

Yet while Jesus does not teach a Trinity of coevals or coequals as one in entity, he apparently does teach a Trinity of co-workers in spirit—One supreme, two subordinate. It is the Father Who begets, Who over-rules, Who commands, Who foreknows, Who commissions, Who sends, to Whom prayer is made by Jesus, and Who is spoken of by him as God, Whose will is supreme, to Whom Jesus makes accounting, and into Whose hands, when dying, he commends his spirit: and

it is the Son and the Holy Spirit, who harken to God and obey. And in all this there is nothing that contravenes human reason. We may not understand, but it is still thinkable, and so believable; and does not contravene the laws of being elsewhere in the universe.

That the doctrine of the Trinity has been an ever-present weakness to Christianity in its contests with rival faiths, can scarcely be questioned. Especially has this been the case with regard to its greatest rival, Islam. In the first three centuries, the era of its simpler faith, Christianity had gained control of Syria and the Mesopotamian East, homeland of Jesus, its founder, together with Asia Minor, birthplace of Paul, its greatest apostle, and seat of the "Seven Churches" of the Apocalypse. It held the South shore of the Mediterranean with its three great metropolitan centers, Alexandria, Tripoli, and Carthage, with their schools and libraries, seats of its earliest literary life. It held Constantinople, head city of the Eastern Empire. It began to sway Rome and the West. Then came three centuries of creed-building and of growing dissensions; but still, with the impetus of the first onrush upon it, it was consolidating, and more slowly spreading, especially in the West. At the end of six centuries, Christianity dominated the then known civilized world. But it was no longer the simple faith of its founder. The creed-builders had done their work only too well; building not so much upon the words of Jesus, the founder, as upon the Epistles of Paul, that "Pharisee, son of a Pharisee"—Acts XXIII:6—with his old Hebræic training and biases.

*Foemen—Yet One*

Then, in the Sixth Century, came Islam, that great Semitic protest against the growing polytheism of the Christian world; and it came to a torn and rent Christianity, wrangling over its dogmas, and divided into factions which were mutually antagonizing and anathematizing each other. Starting with a store of sacred writings immeasurably inferior to the Judæo-Christian Bible, Islam yet had one inestimable advantage—an understandable creed: and it was rich in moral precepts, and rules for daily life. It was the Semitic monotheism of the desert going back to the old tent-life of Abraham and the Desert Peoples. It was the pure deism of Job turned into a battle-slogan. With its ringing cry of, "Allah il Allah!"—"God is God!"—and its fierce denunciation of the growing polytheism of the Christian world with its jangle of a multiple Godhead, Mariolatry, Saints-invocation, as perversions of the truth, Islam swept like a flood over Syria and the Farther East, Asia Minor, Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and on into Spain, and across the plains of France, until combined Christendom, in one despairing death-grapple, checked the on-rush at the battle of Poitiers.

Twelve centuries have rolled by: and Christianity has never gone back. Over all that broad land the minaret and the muezzin have taken the place of the cathedral and the church bells. Like Buddhism, Christianity is an alien in the land of its birth. It has tried arms. It has tried missions. Hundreds of thousands of lives, and countless treasures of money, have gone into

the contest: but that solid wall of monotheism stands unbreached. Commercial and political power have built up Christianity in the West: but Asia and Africa remain to it, as for twelve centuries, closed and impossible lands. Islam is spreading: Christianity is not. It is sweeping Africa. It is taking the heart of Asia. Three words spoken from the sands of Arabia by an unlettered child of the desert have proven more potent than all the elaborate creeds of Christendom. It is the triumph of the One God, and the Simpler Faith.

. . . . . .

Foemen—and yet, at heart, they are One!

. . . . . .

*Old Covenant:* "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is One Lord!" *Deuteronomy VI:4.*

*New Covenant:* "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is One Lord!" *Mark XII:29.*

*Islam:* "Allah il Allah!"

. . . . . .

Let me recapitulate somewhat. It is said that the doctrine of the Trinity is not understandable, and so must be accepted by faith. This is a mistake. It is understandable as a proposition, but it is not believable as a matter of fact. And it is not believable because it is logically self-contradictory, and thus self-destructive, and hence logically impossible. There is a fallacy often made use of by proponents of the dogma, and the fallacy

is this—a failure to distinguish between the merely incomprehensible, and the logically impossible. Such reasoners say: "We are surrounded by things which we cannot understand: shall we therefore deny their existence?" This is not a parallel case, and so is not applicable: and hence the reasoning is defective. I cannot understand how the seed germinates: but in its germination I find no self-contradiction: I simply have reached the limit of my knowledge. I can see, however, a Law of Life, even though it be beyond my comprehension. And so can I see about me a Universe which I cannot understand: but in it I find no self-contradictions: I am simply face to face with things which are beyond my comprehension. I find no self-contradiction: and I accept the fact: for the finite mind, I have reached the limit of the knowable. But suppose one should say to me: "These countless heavenly bodies, which you see, are in reality only one; and yet, at the same time, they are individually separate and distinct, the one from the other." Now I am face-to-face with a logical self-contradiction, and hence an impossibility. The reasoning is the same as that which is brought up to support the doctrine of the Trinity: and the fallacy is the same. It is the failure to distinguish between the merely incomprehensible and the logically self-contradictory, and hence impossible.

That One should be Three: that Three should be One: probably no human mind ever has, or ever can, really believe the proposition: for belief is mentally impossible in the face of the self-contradiction: the mind can only refuse to act; and so let the question rest.

But that is not belief: and in the circumstances a profession of belief is simply a spiritual untruth, a lie to God, and to one's own soul. Does God want that? And the saying of this is not irreverence, not irreligion. On the contrary, it is bringing true religion back from the realm of irrelevant and quite unbelievable spiritual abstractions.

I can realize that my own greatest spiritual uplift has come as I have grown away from the doctrine of the Trinity. I seem to have come out into a broader, clearer field of soul-life. And I realize that, today, I am more closely in touch, mentally and spiritually, with the stern, simple monotheism of Judæism and Islam, than I am with the Trinitarianism of creedal Christianity. It is not irreverence. It is a deeper, higher reverence. To me that ringing cry from Sinai, and as echoed by Jesus, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, our God, is One Lord"—Deuteronomy VL:4; Mark XII: 29—and that other cry from the desert, "Allah il Allah!" mean more than the spineless wording of an unthinkable Trinity. I seem to have come out where God dwells. My upreaching hands take hold upon something.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know *Thee, the Only True God,* and Jesus Christ, *whom Thou hast sent":* Jesus in his last prayer. *John XVII:3.* The Greek is yet stronger—τονμονος αλ ηθινος θεος—"the One true God"—[*monos,* a numerical adjective, *"one-alone"*]. The Vulgate accurately renders it "solum Deum verum"—solus, *"alone." Caput XVII:3.* The thought in both is, singleness of being.

### *Have We Dethroned God?*

The wide supplanting of God in our hymnology impressed me as I sought for hymns meet for worship of the One Father of All Men. I found hymns for creeds, hymns for sects, hymns to a Trinity, hymns to the Holy Spirit, hymns to Jesus, but hymns to God, not many. So generally had God been supplanted by others in the hymnology that it was difficult to select a sufficiently varied list for worship. And chiefly was it the Levitical blood-sacrifice of Egypt, only to a new deity. The kindly God of the old patriarchal life, and of the Open, the "I AM," was gone. Instead, the tortured victim, and the crimson sacrificial blood of Egypt and "The Law": and my heart cried out, "Can this be the God that Abraham knew out in the Open at Mamre, under the stars? And is this the God of the Desert Peoples, and the tent-life, and the night winds of the Waste? Is this the Great Spirit of the simple-minded Indian under the forest trees, and of the wide-spread races of the earth—races that through the countless ages of a long-buried past, ages unnumbered before "The Law," and Calvary, had come into the life of man—yet knew God, and worshipped Him?

It was not irreverence, but my heart revolted at the thought. It seemed sacrilege to thus put away the God that my whole spiritual nature craved—the calm, pure God of the Open. I could not. My need was too great. It was God I wanted: not the shambles. Maybe the years of the old Army life out upon the desert had made all this impossible to me; but the God I found there was so different! I learned to look through Na-

ture up to Nature's God. I have never been able to go back again to the old ways, and the old beliefs. It all seemed so much purer, so much truer, so much kindlier, out there under the stars. The God of the Great Open Places had laid His hand upon me; and I could not go back. I now know that I must walk with Him so to the end. And it is with a heart full of reverence that I say this.

And again let me ask: Have we not done a wrong to Jesus, himself—the Jesus of the old Galilean days? For he expressly disavowed the deityship which our man-made creeds have thrust upon him. He, too, in common with man, looked up to the One All-Father —his, yours, mine: "But go ye to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God and your God," Jesus says to Mary in the Garden. *John XX:17.* And again that text: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." *John XVII:3.*

These texts are not the language of divinity about itself. Rather are they the language of man to God. And did Jesus not mean it? And did he not know?

And I—I have learned to honor the All-Father; and have taken into my life the Teacher, and the Message, that the All-Father has sent.

## "Ego Sum Qui Sum"

—Exodus III—14: Vulgate

"I Am that I Am!"
No hand hath made me: I Am!
No birth, nor dawning, nor day,
When first it was said, Lo, behold,
A Beginning hath come! I Am!
Before that man drew a breath:
Before that the worlds saw the light:
Before that the depths were lit
By the sun-stars that glimmer in space:
I Am!

I Am that I Am! My hand
Hath peopled the rayless dark:
My hand hath kindled the light.
I spake, and it was done.
I willed—it came to pass.
And, lo, through eternity's roll
When all things change, and are gone,
I Am!

Time, with its measured years,
To the worn earth comes and goes:
And man, as a passing smoke,
Is lost on the troubled air:
And the kingdoms rise and fall:
And the nations rot, and are gone
In the slimy ooze of the years,
As a carcass in the reeds
And the ooze of the marsh's brim:

And the seas are drunk by the thirst
Of the desert's drouth, until
They shrink to the glowing sands:
And the hills and the mountains sink,
The old hills, stark and strong,
Back to the burning depths
Of the red earth-fires again.
And I? . . . It is all as naught,
As the shadow of a cloud,
Or the breath of the passing breeze,
Or the mote the floats in the sun
A moment, and is gone . . .
I Am!

The suns, and the whirling spheres,
And the comet in its path
As it flames across the night,
And beyond the farthest star
Are the torches I cast to space.
The burning mists that shine
In the depths of the black abyss
And writhe in the travail pangs
And borning of unnamed worlds,
Are only the vapor smoke,
The glow of my fiery breath
As I breathe on the barren void:
And the whirling vapors thrill
With the germs of life to be.
I Am!

Would ye measure eternity's dure
By the years that come and go?—
The life and death of the worlds
Is only the breadth of a span.
Would ye fathom the depths of space
By the comet's untold flight?—
It is as a finger breadth
To the wildest flight of a star:
And life and death are the edge
Of eternity's hither verge.

And I? Are ye able to know?
Ye know not the way of my path:
Ye know not beginning, or end,
Or name, or the place where I dwell,
Or the depths, or the height of my might:
For measure or mete there is none.
I Am that I Am!

And darkness, and space, and the deep
That hath never ceasing nor end:
And life of the star-sun, or bird
That flits in the light from afar,
Glad for its moment of space:
Or life of the beast, or of man:
And death that cometh to all—
Ye all are my creatures at will:
Ye only are parts of a plan.
The breath of the wind in the waste,
That rustles the leaf, and is gone:
The meteor hurtling in space

That gleams as a fire-fly at dusk,
A moment, a flashing of light,
And onward, and lost in the night—
It all is the work of my hand.
And I?—
I Am that I Am!

. . . . . .

I bow my head: I cannot know:
For the ages come, and the ages go:
And mine the way of a little place:
And His the way of boundless space,
And the years unnumbered, and life,
and death:
And mine the span of a fleeting breath.
I see His works, His ways—but He?
I face the untold mystery.

*Etiam Domine!*

# VIII

## JESUS OF NAZARETH

CHRISTIANITY is singularly destitute of historical data with regard to the life and personality of its founder. Apart from the writings of his immediate followers, history is completely silent with regard to Jesus, and his life upon earth. It seems to have caused scarcely a ripple upon the great current of humanity. He left no writings. The only record comes from his own personal following; and that not committed to writing until some years after his death, when the recollection of his deeds and his words was beginning to fade out from the minds of men. Luke alludes to this fact in the introduction to his Gospel. And it is to be borne in mind that this testimony of a personal following is what is termed in law *ex parte* testimony; that is, testimony furnished only by interested parties: and that is, testimony by those whose interest is to present the most favorable representation of their own side. Because of this, the testimony is to be weighed all the more carefully and thoroughly. And this is not skepticism, nor is it irreverence. On the contrary, in the face of the grave issues to human faith, this precaution is only just and fair to men's souls.

Outstanding in the story of Jesus of Nazareth as it has come down to us are the elements outlined in the considerations which follow.

*The Man*

Born of humble parents in a village of Galilee, Jesus spent his life almost entirely among the lowly: so much so that he remained unnoted even in contemporaneous Jewish history. And for the magnitude of the issues held to have been at stake, the record left of him by even his immediate followers is meager: so meager that it stands as a matter of historical surprise. This may be explained, however, by the humble, and manifestly untrained, character of those whom he gathered about him as his disciples and apostles: and that they did not foresee, possibly could not understand, the magnitude of the issues to which his life and teachings would give rise. Thus, of Peter and John, who stand as leaders among the Twelve disciples, it is said: "And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled." *Acts IV:13.* Until the accession of Saul of Tarsos, the Paul of Acts, and of the Epistles, no one of liberal education or of trained mind—unless possibly Luke, who was not of the immediate following, and who does not seem to have personally met Jesus—appears to have left written word: and Paul writes, not as an eye-witness, for he also seems never to have personally known, or to have seen Jesus: and his writings are thus not a first-hand record of the life, or of the words, of Jesus, but are only hearsay, or surmise, or theories, as to the scope and the intent of his teachings.

### *The Life*

From the birth of Jesus up to the time of the beginning of his public ministry, at supposedly thirty years of age, his life-record has little that is definite: some scenes of vague prophecies; his circumcision as a Jew; some family narratives, yet scanty; some irreconcilable clashings of Matthew and Luke as to the events, the places, and the times, following his birth and on through the years of infancy: from himself, nothing. His first public appearance is when he comes to John at Jordan, seeking baptism: why, is not made clear: only as conforming to a customary Jewish rite. A record of the working of some miracles follows. Then he breaks the personal silence in the synagogue at Nazareth, when he links himself to the chain of the Prophets of the Old Covenant, as in lineal succession: and in doing so incidentally throws a side-light upon the purpose of his coming.

The following is the scene as given by Luke: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias—["Esaias," Septuagint; "Isaiah," King James Version]. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And he

closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened upon him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." *Luke IV:16, 21; Isaiah LXI:1, 3.*

It is to be noted that the office which Jesus here claims for himself is simply that of an evangelist to Israel. In it he makes no mention of any claim to divinity. He is only One sent from God for a specific work, and this he claims to be doing, in his reply to John, which follows.

When John, in prison, sends envoys to him to ask as to his personality, his reply is not of himself, but of his works and his mission: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." *Matthew XI:4, 5.*

The scenes and the words here given are chiefly of value as showing the line of the work which he thus far assumes to himself; for he gives them as characteristics. It is the kindly, sympathetic, helpful life of one such as Peter describes him to Cornelius, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." *Acts X:38.*

One more linking with the past is shown, by inference, however, in the Sermon on the Mount, when he says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." *Matthew V:17, 18.* It is still as one of the line of the old Prophets, sent again to a backsliding Israel: no hint of anything more than that.

That Jesus was well versed in the Old Law, and that his life was lived under its rules, and that to the last he still felt himself, as a Jew born, to be subject to its commands and its rituals and restraints, is shown in the strict conformity with its rites, and in the obedience to its ceremonials—the baptism: the attendance, "as was his wont," upon the synagogue service of the sabbaths; the annual going up to the Passover feast at Jerusalem; the scrupulous keeping of the Paschal Supper, and his careful observance of its forms. There is in it all no departure from the ritualistic life of an orthodox Jew. And he calls himself, "Ο Διδασκαλος," "The Teacher." He seems to have looked upon himself only as a Reformer of Israel: even as one of the old Prophets, with no thought of anything more. Yet there was nevertheless a line of spiritual cleavage slowly setting in between Old and New. It begins to show itself more plainly when half-way through his public ministry: and the change is indicative of the mental and spiritual change in Jesus himself. The first half of his public ministry is full of the hope, the courage, the cheer, of one to whom all things are possible: one to whom the thought of failure has not yet come. It is the peaceful life by the blue waters of Galilee: the kindly fisher-folk, who "leave all and follow him": the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee: the days of Nathan-

iel, the "man without guile," for the evil days of Judas were not yet: the scene of the soul-hungering Nicodemus, and the lesson of the night-winds; the Samaritan woman by the well at Sychar, and the "Living waters": and then the quietly restful hush of the Sermon on the Mount with its Beatitudes; with its simple, trusting prayer; the birds that toil not; the lilies of the hill-side, richer hued than Solomon in all the bravery of his Tyrian vesture: and withal, the kindly injunction to the care-worn faces about him, "Μη μεριμνατε—["Be not anxious!"]—if your Heavenly Father careth for these, will he not care also for you?"

It is an old-time dream of peace, a restful idyl in the soul-life of a weary world, when for a little space the wearing stress is laid aside. It is the after-glow of the days of Abraham and Mamre. Men—tired, worn men—look back to it as they look back to the old tent-life under the stars. But it did not last. There came a change. Read between the lines, and it is all there. The Scribes and the Pharisees, who had looked for the coming of a High-Priest, and the further upbuilding of sacerdotal power, turned from the humble wayside Teacher, whom yet they feared; and, turning, plotted to destroy. The throng that had followed him for the dole of bread, turned back from the "Bread of Life." The ambitious who had looked for the Sword of David, and the Throne, rejected the uncrowned king who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." And with this began the life of homeless wandering. Cast out from the synagogues, he taught by the wayside. He seems

also to have become alienated from his own kin, "for neither did his brethren believe in him." *John VII:5.*

And he felt it—the isolation, the homelessness: felt it with all the keenness of a sensitive nature. Read again between the lines, and it is there. When the throng which had followed him for bread, turned back and fell away, he says piteously to the Twelve, as one whose faith is staggered, "Will ye also go away?" *John VI: 67.* And again, when the Scribe would have followed him, he sadly replies, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." *Matthew VIII:20.*

Yet there was one home still open, the little house at Bethany where Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus lived. In the trips up to Jerusalem, as the end drew near, here he lodged when night-fall came: and here he was welcome. It was humble, very humble; but love was there.

### *The Field and the Message*

That Jesus, at the first, felt he was sent to the broadness of a world mission, does not appear: rather, like the Prophets of old, as a reformer and an uplifter to Israel: for it is still, "God's chosen people": still the Children of the Covenant. It was still Judæism, wrapped up and bound within itself. And it is this narrow field to which his attention is confined. And it is as a reformer and a reclaimer to a straying people that he feels commissioned. When he sends out the Twelve to their mission, it is said: "He commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and

into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: and as ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." *Matthew X:5, 6.*

And again, when the Syro-Phœnician mother beseeches him for her sick daughter, he replies: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." *Matthew XV:24.*

In accordance with this understanding, his life is spent in the narrow field of the Valley of the Jordan, and about the shores of Galilee, with the yearly journey, as a devout Jew, up to the ceremonial at Jerusalem: a little country about twenty-five by a hundred miles in extent, and entirely within the homeland of the Jews.

Yet, a broader vision seems to have come to him in the second half of his public ministry: and it came, as so often to man, through disappointment. It is the bitter ministry of broken hopes, and of pain. With Jesus it is not seemingly the disappointment of one who had foreseen rejection and failure. It is sometimes assumed that he foreknew all this. That would not be disappointment. It is rather the disappointment of one who had expected, or at least hoped for, a different result. The whole tone of his discourses betrays this. And the bitterness of the disappointment shows itself in the tone of his public ministrations. The cheerful, hopeful spirit of the earlier parables, and of the Sermon on the Mount, gives place to a sharper, sterner, more rebuking tone. All is not well. It is now of the tares in the wheat, the wicked husbandmen, the one without the wedding

garment, the sower and the wasted seed, the foolish virgins who are not prepared, the rich young man who fails of eternal life, the buried talent, the sheep and the goats at the Judgment Day—it is of these he speaks. And then the lamenting cry over obdurate Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." *Matthew XXIII:37, 38.*

And there comes now a fiercer denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their untrue lives. The rift between Jesus and his own race-blood is widening into a chasm which threatens to engulf him: for they bitterly resent it. At first they had made guarded inquiry: then they held aloof: now they seek to destroy. It is too often the fate of the would-be reformer. The world does not take kindly to the tale of its shortcomings.

### *And His Kin?*

"And they said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked around upon them who sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." *Mark III:32, 35.* With humanity there would be the heart-ache of alienation back of that reply.

And with it all a growing sadness begins to show itself in the life of Jesus. He feels the foreshadowing of the doom. It gives a somber tinge to the discourses with his disciples. The isolation and the outlawry are telling upon a sensitive nature. He talks of his impending death. He goes much apart to pray. He had prayed before, but with no intimation of a difference from the devout prayers of any other who lifts his heart to God: apparently the supplication for support and guidance; and the heart-cry for close communion with the All-Father. But the time comes when there is a change. A new note is heard. It is now in agony. It is the cry of one wrestling with a great heart-wrecking pang. It is the death-struggle of a soul. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet there is no spirit of rebellion. "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" It is submission. But it is the submission of a breaking heart. There is here no note of divine strength: not even of some super-human strength. It is the suffering, agonized, supplicating cry of human weakness. Yet it is only the prelude to that other bitter, dying cry, when at last the tense heart-strings have snapped: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" *Matthew XXVII:46.*

It has been claimed that Jesus knew from the first that Israel would turn away, and refuse to receive him: that he knew his work among them was foredoomed to failure: and that the death upon the cross was an essential part in a far-reaching plan, formulated long before, and so inevitable. To assume this, is to assume that in his prayers he was not sincere, but only acting a part.

It is to assume that he was capable of dissimulation, unworthy of God, or of Man. Are we willing to admit this? Does Christianity dare admit it? Yet, assume or admit the premise, and no other conclusion can be drawn. It is logically decisive.

The spiritual evolution of the second portion of the public ministry of Jesus appears more especially in the Gospel by John, the Mystic of the Twelve; for this Gospel, unlike the others, is not so much a record of events, but rather the elaboration of a theory, and dwells largely upon the symbolic phases of the words of Jesus. Note these:

"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Ye must be born again." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." *John III.* "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. . . . Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." *John VI.* "I am the door of the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd." *John VI.* "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." *John IV:14.* "I am the resurrection and the life." *John XI:25.* "Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." *John VIII:51.* "I am the light of the world." *John IX:5.* "I am the true vine." *John XV:1.* "I am the way, the truth, and the life." *John XIV:6.*

In John, little is said by Jesus as to why he came: but much stress is placed upon his commission from God, and that he came to do, not his own will, but the will of God who sent him. The central thought seems to be the acceptance of Jesus as the divinely authorized representative of God. Yet, beyond belief in the divine commission of Jesus, little is said as to what the will of God will be: and religion is made a matter of belief, rather than a life.

But back of the teachings, back of the slighted claim to recognition of a divine commission, back of the thought of the spiritual regeneration of Israel—and as these were, more and more, ending only in disappointment—another thought begins to show itself in the second half of the public ministry of Jesus. That it was not clearly defined, however, is shown by the fact that after nineteen centuries of controversy men are still not able to come to an agreement over it. The thought was: That in himself was somehow to be finally fulfilled that old ritualistic idea of a compensatory blood atonement for sin-guilt. Yet it is left largely a matter of inference; for that the thought is clearly and definitely expressed, or the manner of it made plain in his words and teachings, can hardly be claimed in the face of the fact just alluded to, that for nineteen centuries, men—honest, sincere, capable men—have not been able to come to an agreement over it: and that today they are as far apart as ever in their views. The question split the Church of the first few centuries into contending factions: it brought in the strife of arms, and of civil war: it gave excuse for the dungeon, the fagot, the stake; it crippled

Christianity in its efforts at the uplift of the human race: and now, after the nineteen centuries, devout, true men are still as unable to find some common ground of agreement as they were in the beginning. It still remains a matter of disputed inference, and not an accepted fact.

This topic of a blood atonement for sin has already been treated of in the chapter, "The Theory of a Blood Atonement for Sin," so that it is scarcely necessary to repeat the discussion again, only in so far as to throw light upon the question of the purpose of his coming.

### *The Years of Preparation for His Work*

There is a strange lapse in the recorded life of Jesus. Where was he, and what was he doing, from the time of that scene in the Temple with the Doctors of the Law, at the age of twelve years, and the time when, at the age of thirty, he began his public ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth? Eighteen years without record, and unaccounted for. True, it is said that from the scene in the Temple he went back with his parents to Nazareth, "and was subject unto them," and that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." *Luke II:51, 52.* This would probably be the case until the age of manhood: and is thus impliedly limited in the wording. But from the age of twenty to thirty would be ten years when his life would have to be that of a man: no longer a child, nor a youth.

Where, and how, were these ten years passed? Manifestly not as an assistant in a village carpenter

shop. The trained mentality of his life as a public teacher shows this: for it betrays the impress of years of careful preparation for the work. In his public discourses there is inherent evidence of a matured, trained mind. His utterances are not impromptu. There is no hesitation, no vacillation. He knows what he would say: and he says it. It is a line already carefully thought out. This was one of the secrets of his power. "The people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." *Matthew VII:28, 29.*

And in the scope of his public ministry there is evidence, also, of a carefully thought-out plan. The record of his life shows that the plan miscarried in part: but the evidence of its existence is too plain to be questioned. At his first public appearance, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he displays close familiarity with the prophecies of the coming of a Messiah to Israel, and keenly, and pointedly, makes claim for himself of a place in the line of succession of the Prophets of Israel, and of the fulfilment of the prophecies in himself: and the office which he claims for himself is, as indicated by them, that of a reformer and a redeemer of Israel. And the racial narrowness of the old Hebrew shows itself in him, together with a failure as yet to grasp the wider thought of humanity and a world religion: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." *Matthew V:17.* "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." *Matthew XV:24.*

Yet, even from the first, his teachings showed a

broadness of spiritual view, and a maturity of perception, that were beyond the standard of the Pharisee and the Doctors of the Law; and this was steadily undermining the structure that Judæism had slowly built up. For this they hated him. It was the aroused instinct of self-defense. And his assertions are made with a boldness of assurance that indicates one well-established in his own mind: "Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you." (Sermon on the Mount: *Matthew V.*) These are the words of one fully persuaded of his own authority, and who has gone carefully over the doctrines he is propounding. And in it all there is a kindly broadness, a spiritual clarity and charity, a loftiness of outlook, that were new and strange to Judæism. Whence did these come?

Paul shows the influence of the Farther East after the three years spent in preparation and study out on the caravan routes of that Arabian Plateau beyond Bashan, and at Damascus, the focal point for the meeting of East and West. Did such an influence enter into the life of Jesus during those ten unrecorded, formative years before his work began? His teachings show nearer kinship to the kindliness, the purity, the broad charity, the righteousness, of the early Buddhism of that Farther East, than to the harsher Jewish inheritance from Egypt. For it is to be borne in mind that all religions are composite in character: having in them somewhat that is inherited, somewhat that is borrowed, somewhat that is original.

This much we may reasonably assume: That we have not yet fathomed all of the molding influences

which shaped the life of Jesus, and gave cast and color to his teachings. And the place, and the time, to look for these lies in that unrecorded—and unknown—ten years between the ages of twenty and thirty. There is here an unwritten chapter to be opened up. Of the life after the age of thirty we have records, though scant: and from the records of those remaining three years we have to find such answer as is possible to the question—Who, and What, was Jesus of Nazareth?—for this is all that we now possess. Time, and further research, may reveal more.

Did the molding influence of the Farther East, which shows itself in Paul, also help in the shaping of the mental life, and the teachings, of Jesus? The influence of that Farther East in the whole genesis and evolution of Christianity has, possibly, never been duly estimated. We are only beginning to understand the vastness and the might of these old-time civilizations, and the far-reaching influence of their mental life upon the after mental life of the world. And we are only beginning to understand the intimate binding together of that ancient world through the instrumentality of its trade lines—the great caravan route from Asia Minor, and the West, down through the long chain of the Taurus mountains by the Gates of Cilicia—Αι Πυλαι Κιλικιαι of Xenophon—to the fertile plains, and the millet and wheat and vines of that summer-land fronting upon the sea: then out through the Amarus Range by the Gates of Syria—Πυλαι Συριαι—and on to Antioch on the Orontes: thence across the Syrian Lands to the waters of the upper Euphrates; and then, Baby-

lonia, and Iran, and India, and the Farther East—the branching line from Antioch down the Valley of the Jordan, and on past Galilee and Jerusalem to Egypt and the Nile—the return caravan line from the Far East branching off by the way of Palmyra, that ancient "Tadmor of the Wilderness," to Damascus, and thence by the watered plains of Bashan, and through Galilee to join the line to Egypt, thus flanking the arid plateau of the Northern Arabian Desert.

Desert, mountain passes, water—these were the factors that settled lines of traffic, and of migration, and of conquest. Add to all, the trade from the Phœnician ships of the ports from Tyre on up to and beyond Sidon, on the landed way to the marts of Farther Asia, all converging to the waters of the upper Jordan. And Galilee, and that Upper Jordan Plain, were the crossing-point of it all. This made of that land a place where East and West, North and South, met to exchange wares and ideas, while they rested and recruited the weary camels after their long journeying. The cosmopolitan, non-Judæic character of the population of Galilee and the Upper Jordan region is shown in Matthew IV:15, and is there quoted from Isaiah IX:1, written nearly eight centuries before: "The land of Zabulon and of Naphthali, by the way of the sea (Phoenicia), beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles" —[Των εθνων—"peoples," "nations"].

This land had thus become the crucible for the melting and the mixing of the various and variant philosophies and faiths of that ancient world. The variety and the vastness of the mingling of the race-life of an-

tiquity in the land of Syria is revealed in the twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel. If all other sources of information were blotted out, the commercial and mental life of that ancient world could be rebuilt from that one chapter, and Herodotus—almost from that chapter alone.

As said, we are only beginning to know of the vastness, and might, of those old-time civilizations, and the far-reaching influence of their mental life upon the after (mental) life of the world. They were centuries in advance of the mental and spiritual awakening of the West: their highly organized systems of government—their vast industrial development—their widespread commerce—their great cities—their libraries—their settled codes of law! And then their spiritual evolution! Brahmanism, with its Trinity in the Godhead, Brahm, Vishna, Siva, was hoary with age before Christianity formulated its Trinitarian creed. The deadly battle of good and evil for the soul of man was the central thought of Zoroastrianism on the highlands of Iran when David and that Fifty-First Psalm were yet to be: long ere Paul sent up that despairing cry—"I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me!" *Romans VII: 21.* Buddhism, with its broad, tolerant charity, was a wide-spread, strongly established faith, six centuries before the time of Jesus, its field covering Asia from China and Thibet to India, and on to Ceylon.

And it can hardly be supposed that the teachings and the influence of those old-time faiths stopped with the bounds of their own lands. We know that such

teachings and such influence did not on the East, or the North, or the South. Would they not also follow along the lines of travel and trade by the great caravan routes Westward? There, however, they met the strongly entrenched faith of Judæism. Their operation would have to be along new lines, or a new line. Was that line the new faith of Christianity, then in its formative stage —and did they help in its shaping?

Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity—these three are the Aryan contribution to the religion of humanity: for while Christianity inherited some things from Judæism, and mainly through the instrumentality of Paul, yet it is not Judæism. Its evolution as a working force, and as a world religion, lies in the Farther East, and the Farther West, with Judæa as a connecting link. The men of that mighty past were foundation-builders. While they lacked the great material and scientific accumulations of the modern world, yet they did much, and they knew much. And they thought: thought deeply and wisely upon many of the grave problems of life: and especially along lines where material advancement was not essential to advanced thought. Human souls grappled with the eternal problems then, as souls grapple with them now: and the end reached was the same. What are ages in the eternities? We face millenniums: not centuries.

Our civilization, and our thought, are what they are because the men of an older past were what they were. They, too, knew of right and wrong. They, too, knew of equity and fairness between man and man. They, too, knew of righteousness and of God. Ecclesiastical

bars, then as now, often obstructed the way. But they saw! Read the Vedas; read the Avestas: read the Code of Hammurabi; read the Pyramid Texts, and the Book of the Dead! Truth was there: and light: and it was good. Mingled with much that to us seems crude: but possibly we fail to understand the figurative speech in which their ideas are often clothed. And maybe much of our theological speech would have seemed crude and obscure, or meaningless, to them. Men often frame meaningless and baseless figments in their theologies. We do. Maybe they also did. This is where humanity unwittingly faces the unknowable, and can only guess. And then language, at best, is imperfect, and lags far behind, or drifts away from, the thought it struggles to express. And the translation from one language to another is never more than moderately successful. There is a spirit to speech that eludes us. It is the translator rather than the translated that we get. And if this be the case with modern contemporary languages, how much more must it be when the tongues are long unspoken and forgotten!

There is much, strikingly much, startlingly much, that is common to the lives and the teachings of Jesus and Gautama . . . their estimate of the relative unimportance of this life, and the deliberate turning away from worldly ties, and worldly ambitions, to dedicate their own lives to the teaching and the preaching of righteousness . . . the renunciation of the ties of family and kin, and the taking up of a life of homeless wandering . . . the choosing of a life of poverty . . . the break with the older type of religious observances,

and the setting up of a new standard . . . the self-abnegation, the unworldly altruism: and, withal, the kindliness, the helpfulness, the infinite compassion, the charity, the love. And then that strangely spiritual faith of Zoroaster, with its never-ending struggle of light and darkness, ages before the introduction to the Gospel of John was penned!

Yet despite the Three-fold God of Brahmanism, and despite the Trinitarian teachings of John and of Paul, Judæism left one indelible mark upon the new faith—the strong, enduring impress of that old Hebrew God of the Desert. This abides: marred by the cast of the Three-fold God of the Indian plains which had drifted from the Far East to give form and color to the theology of John and of Paul; yet it is the Hebrew impress that abides: and after the ages it is the One God of the Desert Peoples that has fast hold upon the heart of the world. All else is dropping away.

In all investigations as to Who, and What, Jesus of Nazareth was, it must constantly be borne in mind that the atmosphere in which he grew up was not Jewish. Jerusalem and Judæa were the Jew. But the Valley of the Upper Jordan and of Galilee, and the great, well-watered plains of Bashan, were not Jewish; they were Aramæic-Syrian, long under cosmopolitan contacts.

To one of these scattered families of the Upper Jordan Jesus was born; "by common repute"—Luke III:23—son of Joseph of Nazareth. He was circumcised after the Jewish rite; and seems to the end of his life to have classed himself as a Jew. But the yearly

trip across the land of Samaria up to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem, and his attendance upon the synagogue service at Nazareth, were apparently his sole close touch with the Jewish racial life. And the history of his own life shows a steady drifting away from Judæism, while the whole atmosphere of his teachings is not Judæic. Rather do his teachings betray the broader atmosphere of the cosmopolitan life in which he grew up, and which was constantly about him in Galilee. So marked is this that the claim has at times been set up, though apparently with no adequate support, that he really was not of true Jewish blood. It was this broader atmosphere, probably, that turned the rigid, orthodox Judæism of Jerusalem, with the intolerance of its bitter race-caste, against him. "And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth with publicans and sinners?" *Mark II:16;* etcetera.

The Jews instinctively felt the alien taint, and guarded against it. And yet, now, after nineteen centuries, the Jews unconsciously stand side-by-side with the one they rejected. The Teacher, and the Sermon on the Mount, have triumphed. Nicodemus has been born again.

There is a curiously unexplained incident told by Matthew in the account of the birth of Jesus. The "Wise Men from the East," who came seeking the new-born "King of the Jews": Who were they? And why did they come? And what were they seeking? That they should come from the great empires of the Far East to seek, and to honor, a new-born ruler of a small,

obscure people of the Far West, is not a reasonable supposition. There must have been some other explanation. Were they from India: and were they seeking the reincarnated Buddha? No other explanation is apparent. This we know—that Buddhism foretells the periodic re-coming of a Tathagata, a Divine Teacher, to man. He might come to one land: he might come to another: but he was to come, and to bring more light. And he was to come as a new-born child. And this also we know—that it was an era of world-wide unrest. The old religions were dying out. They had crystallized: but the world had gone on. And now that unrestful world was expectantly waiting. It seemed to feel that the fulness of God's time was again come. The Jew was waiting. The Far West was waiting. The Farther East was waiting. Not for a king: but for a Teacher, a Bringer of new Light. The Prophets of Israel had said he would come. The prophets of Buddhism had said he would come. Only, Buddhism was broader: for he was not to be to one especial people as their racial possession, but to all nations, to all men. The one was tribal in its conception; the other, cosmic.

The "Wise men from the East" came, and found him: "And prostrating, they worshiped him"—[και πεσοντες προς—εκνηοαν αντα προς—κυνεω—"to do homage, "to worship"]. Men do not worship an earthly king. It was manifestly more than a king they sought. "And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, and being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their

own country another way." *Matthew II:11, 12.* And then the curtain falls, and they pass from the scene. . . .

What bearing could this incident have had upon the life of Jesus? When we consider his life and his teachings, we might, possibly, reply: Much! for it is said of the wonder-scenes of his birth, that "Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." That she never told them to her son, is not probable. And this scene may have helped to turn his mind to that Farther East, the influence of whose teachings is so plainly manifest in his own words.

# IX

## WHO, AND WHAT, WAS JESUS OF NAZARETH?

BUT Who, and What, was he?—the one who came to reform: but who left, instead, a new faith for the world. For nineteen centuries humanity has found no answer upon which all men can agree. Even the Twelve Disciples whom he gathered about him seem to have been in doubt. They speak of him sometimes as a man, sometimes as divine. Paul, the real founder of the infant Church, speaks of him in the same uncertain way. The Church itself went for three centuries before it finally reached a definite conclusion, and spake authoritatively at the Council of Nikaia; but even then to a divided and dissenting people, with a century more of bitter and bloody religious war before dissent was nominally crushed out.

In any discussion as to who and what Jesus of Nazareth was, his own words about himself are the only competent and proper authority. In the three years of his public life and daily teachings he surely had ample time and abundant opportunity to say all that he might wish to say, or saw fit to say, concerning his own personality. And it is only reasonable to suppose that he would do so, and not leave it to others—in after years, when his words were beginning to fade from the memo-

ries of men—to be the decisive authority upon such vital points, or to be spokesmen for him. Nor, in so grave a matter, would it be just to man that he should do so. It is due to humanity that the fulness of the message which he had should come from his own lips, and not be left for others to announce after he was gone, or to be a matter of inference or hearsay.

The important thing, therefore, in the discussion as to Who, and What, Jesus of Nazareth was, is not what the Early Fathers thought, nor what Paul thought, and not even what the Twelve Disciples thought, but: *What did he say?* And a majority vote of the Council of Nikaia, or of Constantinople, or of Trent, or Westminster, cannot go beyond, and cannot weigh more or less than, what the simple words of Jesus himself authorize. His own statement must constitute the final court of decision: there is no other. And from his words there can be no appeal. We sometimes, in our zeal, forget that we have as little right to add to the words, or the plain, direct teachings, of Jesus, in order to lift him up, as we have to take from them to drag him down. Either course can only be a wrong to him. There is a lesson to be learned in this from the warning words of Moses to Israel with regard to the statutes of the Lord: "Ye shall not add unto the words which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it: that ye may keep the commandment of the Lord your God which I command you." *Deuteronomy IV:2.* In our zeal we are apt to disregard this caution. Nor does the Ark of the Lord need steadying.

And it is well here to repeat the caution: That unless we accept words as having a definite and fixed meaning, with all which that meaning carries with it; and thus make use of them; we have nowhere to stand in our reasoning. Without this, all is vague and unsettled. And we must further accept as reasonable, that the speaker, or writer, in making use of words, knows, and intends to accept, the meaning which ordinary usage has affixed to them, with all which that meaning implies. Unless we do this, we have no possibility of knowing what meaning the speaker, or writer, intended to convey. His statements would be entirely valueless. This rule is absolute in a court of law, and justly so: for without it, any sane conclusion would be an impossibility. The rule must be held as equally imperative in any court of reason elsewhere. And this sane rule applies as imperatively to the words of Jesus about himself, as to the words of any other witness elsewhere. It is just to Jesus: it is just to man. The failure to realize the vital importance of this just and equitable rule, and to act upon it, has been the bane of theological discussions in all ages.

*Who, and What, was Jesus of Nazareth?*

*Was he God?*—"True God of true God," as the creed adopted by majority vote of the Council of Nikaia, in the year 325 A.D., words it: and as the various Church creeds since then have, with little change of wording, accepted it?

In answer let us examine the titles which he applies to himself. Some fourteen times he applies to himself

the term, "Lord." It is the Greek word, κυριος. The word means, in the Greek, "one having power, or authority," "a lord or master." It is applied to rulers, masters of slaves, heads of households, but is not the word for God: that word is θεος, *Theos*. In the Septuagint, and the New Testament Greek, together with these uses it is at times employed to designate the Lord of the Universe, God, but generally in such way as to show that the ordinary meaning is departed from, and a special meaning given to it in that particular case. Jesus makes use of the word constantly in his parables and teachings in the primary sense of an earthly ruler, or master, or householder. In the cases in which he applies it to himself, in no single instance does he add to the term any qualifying words to show that he departs from the ordinary usage, or intends to convey the idea of divinity as attached to himself. Nor does he ever, in a single instance, apply to himself the distinctive word, θεος, *Theos*—God.

In some fourteen cases also he, directly or indirectly, calls himself the "Son of God." Yet the words carry at once, and in themselves, an absolute recognition of a difference in identity, as much so as when made use of to designate the relationship of parent and child among men. The same statement may be made, and with equal pertinency and force, of the passages wherein he speaks of God as his Father. The recognition of the difference in identity is also apparent in the phrases which he makes use of with regard to his mission upon earth. He is sent of God: he prays to God—John XVII: it is to the Father's will he surrenders his

own will—Matthew XXVI:36, 44: and in the glimpses he gives of the coming Judgment, he, Jesus, is "to sit upon the right hand of the power on high," thus recognizing God as an entity separate and apart and complete in Himself. *Matthew XXVI: 64.*

This distinction of personalities is carried throughout his words in the four Gospels constantly: "And this is life eternal, That they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." *John XVII:3.*

Yet when Jesus says, "I and my Father are one"—John X:30—he would seem apparently to be assuming for himself the divine entity. But when the statement is placed side-by-side with his words in the last prayer with his disciples, a new light is thrown upon his meaning: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that *thou hast sent* me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one." *John XVII: 20, 22.*

Herein he makes the measure of his own oneness with God the same as the oneness with God which comes to all believers. And the disciples and apostles seem to have so understood the words. Jesus says: "Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." *I John, III:2.* And again: "But as many as received him to them gave

he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." *John I:12.* Paul says, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God." *Romans VIII:14.*

There is one text, however, which stands as conclusive not only upon this point of the absolute difference of identity, but also as to the real nature of his relationship to God: and it is now the risen Christ that speaks. It is in the scene with Mary: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God." *John XX:17.* No other explanation of this verse is possible but that of an absolute difference of personalities. And more: He thus, by his own words, clearly and unmistakably expressed, classes himself side-by-side with man in looking up to one common Father and one common God: and concedes that he is not that God. The text is conclusive. And it is Jesus himself that speaks. Did he not know?

One fact will be noted by the careful student—that the words of Jesus which are depended upon to prove his Godship will admit of other meanings: but the words in which he denies his Godship will not admit of other meanings. Which are entitled to the greater credence?

### *Was Jesus Coeval With God?*

When Jesus speaks of himself, not once, but many times, as the "Son of God," he must be supposed to know the full logical force of the words which he

makes use of just as when he speaks of himself as the "Son of Man." The word, "Son," when made use of to designate the fact of generation—and the word "begotten" is added by him in confirmation of his intent—implies in itself logical sequence of origin, and can admit of no other logical conclusion. Had he not intended this construction to be placed upon it, there were many other forms of speech in which he might with equal ease have designated himself, and which would have been free from all ambiguity. But he did not: and the only reasonable inference is that he made use of the words with full realization of their natural meaning, and with full acceptance of the logical conclusions to be drawn therefrom. Not to do so would be a juggling with words in a way which would be difficult to reconcile with the idea of strict rectitude.

And we have no right to read into the words of the Scriptures, or into the words of any book, other than the plain, direct meaning of the words as written, unless special license and authority is therein given so to do. This is one of the accepted maxims of all law, whether human or divine. Without this limitation there would be no certainty to any law. All would be chaos. That Jesus himself recognized the logical status established by his own words, is made plain when he says: "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." *John V:26.* For the one who gives life must himself antedate, in time of being, the act of giving life. An act implies time, not eternity. It was not . . . It is.

### *Was Jesus Coequal With God?*

The coequality with God, the Father, is a theological assumption rather than a directly expressed, or even reasonably supported, Scriptural claim. There is nothing in the words of Jesus himself to clearly, or even presumably, support such a doctrine. On the contrary there is one direct statement made by him which at once, and unmistakably, contradicts the assumption.

### *The Answer in His Own Words*

When Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I" (John XIV:28), there was no reservation expressed, no modification. The words are clear, direct, unmistakable. And the Greek can admit of no other construction, for the words are few, simple, and made use of in the most natural manner. The word, Μειδξων—*Meidzon,* "greater," is the comparative of Μεγας—*Megas,* "great," and is without secondary meanings. The context would seem to show that the words of Jesus are those of one weary and worn, who gladly turns back to a power higher and stronger than himself. They are a part of that sadly pathetic last discourse to his disciples in the upper chamber: and just before that pleading prayer to the Father, in which he gives to Him an accounting of the trust which had been committed to his hands. And this prayer only carries out the thought which runs through his whole ministry, the thought of one not acting as an independent, but on the contrary, one only delegated and empowered from a higher source to a special work:

He says he came, not of his own will, but is sent by the Father. *John VII:28, 29; VIII:42; XVI:5; XVII:18-25.*

He says his teachings are not of himself, but are dictated by the Father. *John VII:16; XII:49, 50; XV:15; XVII:8.*

He says his power on earth is only delegated from the Father. *John V:19, 27; XVII:2.*

He explicitly disavows the possession of any power of his own, and says he is powerless without the power which has been given him by the Father. *John V: 19, 30.*

He says it is not himself, but the indwelling Father, that doeth his works. *John XIV:10.*

He says he came to do the will of his Father; and he bows submissively to the Father's will, while admitting that his own will had not been in accord with the will of the Father, but different. *Luke XXII:42; Mark XIV:36.*

He renders back to the Father an accounting of the trust which had been committed to him by the Father. *John XVII:4.*

It is to the Father he turns for comfort and strength in the hour of discouragement and of agony: and it is to the Father's over-ruling will he submissively bows when his prayer for relief is not granted. *Matthew XXVI:39, 42; Mark XIV:35, 36; Luke XXII:42.*

In the gloom and despair of the cross, he cries out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" *Matthew XXVII:46.*

And as the end draws near, it is to the hands of the Father he commends his spirit—[παρα-τιθημι, "to entrust," "to give over for safe keeping"]. *Luke XXIII: 46.*

And looking away from earth to the future, he says that his power in heaven will be subordinate to that of the Father. *Matthew XX:23.*

He further says that in heaven he is to sit, not in the throne of power, but upon the right hand of The Power. *Matthew XXVI:64.*

These texts are not all that might be given: they are only a few of the many which could be cited to the same import.

But it has been said, in attempted explanation of the statements thus made by Jesus as to the comparative relationship existing between himself and the Father, that it was the human, and not the divine side of Jesus, that is here represented. But he does not say so: nor is there any hinting in the Scriptures that he so intended it to be understood, or that this was the case. It is again pure assumption. Nor with regard to the texts bearing upon his relationship with the Father in the Hereafter, would any such explanation be possible, as the human side of his being would necessarily and manifestly be left behind when he was given up to bodily death. To make this plea, is again to read into the Scripture Record a meaning not therein expressed, and not even suggested; and this we have no right to do. To do this is virtually tampering with the records, and is not honest. And such procedure, if assented to in one case, cannot be refused assent in other cases, and for all

sorts of purposes, and would entirely destroy the reliability of the record as an authority. It at once gives latitude for the vaguest and the wildest of theories upon all topics. Such liberties with the records would at once be thrown out of any court of law. *What does the record say?*—not what does some theorist fancy it says, or might wish it says—is the only safe and sane standard.

There is a curiously interesting side-light thrown upon this question of coequality with God in the statement made by Jesus when speaking of the coming great day of the Lord, and of his own return therewith: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." *Mark XIII:32.*

The only reasonable assumption is that Jesus meant just what he said, and that he did not know: hence, by his own testimony, he was not omniscient; hence was lacking in one of the absolute essentials of divinity as possessed by the Father: hence could not be coequal with the Father. No other conclusion is possible. Did Jesus not know his own limitations?

But again it has been said, that this limitation of his prescience was because of the incarnation: that in taking upon himself the form of man the divine nature, which was his before, became restricted in its manifestations and powers, and that to this extent the God was limited in action. But this again is pure assumption. He did not say so: neither is there the slightest evidence that he gave, to any other, power or authority to make such a statement for him. It is an unauthorized and

unwarranted adding to the Message which he gave. And it would carry with it the unavoidable and unbelievable conclusion that God may at times divest himself of a portion of his divine nature, and yet be the same, and God. Such a conclusion would be so utterly irreconcilable with the very basic laws of being as to be unthinkable. The whole theory of the coequality of Jesus with the Father is purely an assumption of the after theology: and, as shown, directly contravenes not only his own words, but also the entire tenor of his teachings about himself: for he ever pictures himself as occupying, both upon earth and in heaven, a position of subordination to the Father.

I have discussed the question as to who, and what, Jesus of Nazareth was not: and the testing has been based entirely upon his own words. The result has not been in accord with the theses of the creeds. Yet it is the sum of his own words. In the further discussion of the nature of the personality of Jesus we enter upon a field of many and diverse opinions, varying from Godhead to humanity. And in this field we have need of the broadest charity for the beliefs of others. All men do not think alike. Probably all could not think alike. Yet all seem to be equally honest and sincere in their beliefs. All men do not see with the same eyes, or reason with the same minds. God, and race, and heredity, and environment, have made them so. Hence the need of a charity broad as the spiritual life of man. And in it all we should draw back from claiming for our words and thoughts a divine origin. We should be careful not presumptuously to pose as the mouth-

piece of God. This much would seem to be clear, however:

*By his own words, Jesus was not God.*
*By his own words, he was not coeval with God.*
*By his own words, he was not coequal with God.*
*But, by his own words, he was a separate and inferior entity.*

### *Who, then, and What, was He?*

He never clearly told. He seems to have intentionally thrown the reserve of a certain mystery about his own personality. When John, the Baptist, sends two of his followers to Jesus with the inquiry, "Art thou he who should come, or do we look for another?" the reply of Jesus is indirect and inconclusive. (Matthew XI:2, 5; Luke VII:19, 22.) And his reply to the Jews, when they seek to have him speak plainly as to his personality, is equally inconclusive. (John X:25.) In both instances he seems to evade a direct answer. That he might have told, and so clearly that the world could never have misunderstood, we can hardly question. That he did not, no one who looks out upon the centuries of disputation, can claim. Why did he not? That was his own secret. He never told. But he did tell this: That he was one sent from God with a Message: a Teacher of Divine Truth: a light to the darkened and bewildered world: the promise of a better hope for suffering humanity. If he saw fit not to tell more than this, what right have we to press beyond the limit of his reserve?

The primitive Church seems to have recognized and respected the reserve which he thus threw about himself, and apparently made little attempt to pry within the mystery. That he had brought new light upon the way of life where before there was darkness: that he taught peace to a troubled earth; that he made smoother the path down through the Valley of the Shadow: and that, somehow, through his life heaven seemed nearer and dearer to broken hearts—this was enough: and they trusted, and were glad.

It was reserved for the Council of Nikaia, three hundred years later, to do what the Early Church had refrained from doing, namely, to mark off with the theological measuring-rod the metes and bounds of the personality of Jesus. Are we satisfied with the results? Is humanity the better for it? Is earth richer, and the way to heaven clearer? The torn and wrangling sects of the ages, centuries of proscription and persecution, and religious wars, and martyrdom, may make answer.

And the Jesus who never told all, the Jesus who chose to keep the cloak of mystery about so much of his real nature, yet the Jesus who could say of the little band about him, "My Brethren," this Jesus is a grander figure to man than the Christ pictured, and analyzed, and dissected, in the hair-splitting theological controversies of the ecclesiastical councils, and as portrayed with metes and bounds in the contending creeds. And the great heart of the world has instinctively recognized this fact, and is turning back to the simple teachings of Him of Nazareth for its spiritual guidance and its inspiration. It is again the old, old story—the heart

of man wiser and truer than his creeds. And the world of today drops a tear of pity over the martyred ashes: refuses to ostracize the heterodox: and will defy the ban, and hold out the hand of fellowship to those whom the councils brand as unbelievers.

The power in the life of Jesus of Nazareth, that which gave to him his strange influence over the hearts of men, lies in the fact that he gave all, and asked nothing. And greater than any possible divinity of Jesus was his humanity. Herein is his hold upon the world. For to every eager heart comes the emulous thought, "If he could do this: if he could give all and ask nothing: maybe to me also this supreme self-abnegation may come." It is humanity, likewise, lifted up out of self, even as He was lifted up, and by one who also was man, born of woman.

### Via Crucis

Earth's Calvarys are many: not alone
Upon the hill-top, just without the gate,
The cross uprears its cruel, martyr form:
And not always the jeering, scoffing throng,
Nor the drawn face where all may look and see.
These came to earth one time; but only once:
And some men saw; and some men's eyes were blind.

These are earth's Calvarys: Where'er a soul,
A human soul, for others bears a pain
Which it might turn from on the other side,
Might turn from, but does not: might turn from, but
instead

Bares its own breast to take the wounding hurt,
And saves another from the deadly pang.
It, too, has trod the path without the gate.
It, too, has found its cross, and Calvary.
And some may see: and still may some be blind.

*Who, then, and What, was He?* I do not know. The creeds do not know: they can only say, It is an unexplainable mystery. No man knows: for, as said, he never told but in part, and the mystery never lifted but in part: it only grows deeper with the centuries.

The world has ever been puzzled to classify those who have come to it with a Message from the Beyond. It knows man. It knows God. But these who come with a message: Who and what are they? And in its perplexity it has sometimes classed them as divine: for it has known no order of beings between. It is thus that teachers of great spiritual truths, as the fading ages cast a halo about their lives and their teachings, have gained their apotheosis. Yet it does not follow that, because we do not know, therefore there is no connecting-link of beings between the human and the divine. And it is in this intermediate scale that Jesus would seem to have classed himself. By his own words, not God: less than God: not man: apparently more than man. Yet his statements about himself are vague, and at times apparently contradictory: for about his own personality he drew the cloak of uncertainty. This much, however, is clear: That while he has thus seen fit to keep the cloak about the nature of his own being, he has yet told how to walk the pathway in this life so

that the Valley of the Shadow shall be robbed of its terrors. And he has shown the fore-gleam of heaven here upon earth. For more than this we may wait in an unspeakable gladness.

*Is the Christ of Our Creeds the Jesus of Galilee?*

Is the Christ of the modern creeds the Jesus who walked the shores of Galilee nineteen centuries ago? Is it not, rather, an artificial character, elaborate, unnatural, untrue to the facts, which we have built up, century after century, out of men's fancies, men's prejudices, men's desires? Have we done a wrong to the simple-hearted, kindly life of Jesus, with its unworldly wisdom and its strangely *unhuman* insight into the deep things of the spirit? Have we wronged Him, the Teacher with the message of better things for humanity? Have we crippled, and brought discredit upon the message, with the tangled web of theological abstractions in which we have enmeshed him? And have we also done discredit and dishonor to the very nature of God himself, in ascribing coevality, and coequality with Him to one who expressly disclaimed such attributes, and who ranked himself rather as one with man? In what way does this differ from the religion of our ancestors who apotheosized and made Gods of those who came with message of divine things, and who could throw more light upon the pathway into the unknown? Have we been walking in the old footsteps after all: and is humanity only repeating itself? For The Teacher said: "And this is life eternal, that they

might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." *John XVII:3.*

And we, too, have apotheosized him who was sent.

And have we not wronged the world? For the world, this sin-cursed, worn, and weary world—it is the Jesus of the old Galilean days it wants, not the theological abstraction we have built up! It is the kindly voice, the helping hand, of the Elder Brother: and above, and beyond, the calm face of the All-Father, looking down in a great, God-like pity and love upon his children, the toiling sons of men. These it can understand. These it can take into its weary life. And are not these enough?

And the world is learning to turn away from the theologically built-up Christ whom it cannot understand, back to Jesus, the simple-hearted, kindly Teacher of the old Galilean days. It is forgetting the Christ of the abstruse, incomprehensible Trinity. It remembers the Jesus who gathered the lilies upon the hill-side, and said: "Be ye not troubled; your heavenly Father careth for you even as he careth for these, and as he careth for the birds of the air." And it remembers the Jesus of the wayside; the Jesus who spake words of comfort and cheer to the broken-hearted; the Jesus at whose feet the Magdalene knelt and bathed them with her tears. It remembers the Jesus of the Two Great Commandments. It is today the Elder Brother, rather than the Man-God, that is reaching the heart of the world. The fact may be theologically deplored: but it is there. What are we going to do about it? The church of the early ages made reply by kindling the fires of persecu-

tion and of martyrdom—but the question was not answered. And what if, after all, the heart of the world is right?

. . . . . .

*Have I lost Jesus?* No! It seems to me I am at last finding him. The thought of that strangely beautiful human life has brought him nearer. He is to me no longer as one standing far above upon the dizzy heights, and in a divine, far-off compassion, looking down. He is more. He is as one midway upon the steep ascent, reaching back one human hand of helpfulness to the toiling sons of men; with the other, himself reaching upward to grasp hold upon some source of help still higher. And above all, the calm face of the All-Father, looking down in a divine compassion that is for him, for me, for all. And the Jesus of those old Galilean days is again, to me at least, the kindly Elder Brother. The fragrance of the old-time lilies is about him. The blue waters of Tiberias again lap upon the sands at his feet as in the cool gray of the morning when his words touched the hard fisher-life of Peter, "And he left all, and followed him." The breath of the night-wind that blew down from Lebanon, and in through the open casement of the room where he revealed to the longing soul of Nicodemus the mysteries of the Spirit—it is the magic breath that drifts across the dim centuries. It seems to me that at last I begin to know Him. And it has brought peace. Peace—and hands reaching out to the Beyond.

*And the Jew?* It was the Pharisee that turned the scale against Jesus with the Israelitish people. It was

their class-reply to his rebuke of their untrue lives. For Jesus was a broader man than the Judæism to which he came. This probably was one of the reasons for the growing hostility to him. And his was no exceptional case. It has been so with the broader men in all ages, and among all peoples. It was so that the Greek turned against Socrates. The broader life comes as a reproach and a rebuke to the narrowness, and is resented: and so Israel, swayed by the Pharisee, turned away from the gentle, kindly words, and the blameless life, of the last and greatest of their Teachers, and became bitter and hard. It was the turning-point in their spiritual history as a people. Israel became The Jew. And this bitterness, which might have died out under more favorable influences, was confirmed and intensified by the hard creeds and practices which the Christian churches built up about Him, the Christ—the Χριστος, the "Anointed" messenger to all—creeds and practices foreign to the whole spirit of his teachings and his life. The Pharisee failed to see in the Message which Jesus brought, the normal evolution, and the supreme flowering, of the older doctrines of Sinai. To him it only seemed as the destruction of the Old; and he, as a church man, possibly not unnaturally, turned in hostility against it. And the turning was intense and bitter: for that old Hebrew was an intense and bitter man.

*And the Christian?* He saw in the bitterness of the Jew only the perversity of a doomed and lost race. And so they drifted apart, these two who were joint heirs to the grandest spiritual inheritance that ever fell to man: and each became to the other anathema maranatha. It

was not the first time men have failed to see, at the hour, God's hand as it works His will in the uplift of humanity: and it will probably not be the last. But it is about this life of Jesus, so strangely gentle and lovable in its whole tenor, that Jew and Christian will yet find their common brotherhood. And it will be when Jew has cut loose from the baleful heritage of the Pharisee, and when Christian has remodeled and made more Jesus-like, his creeds and his practices. For He said: "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me."

And there shall be no more Jew nor Christian: only the Greater Israel of God: and beyond this, and yet broader, the common brotherhood of all peoples who lift longing hearts to the kindly face of the one All-Father. For the world at last, after all these troubled ages, is beginning to find once more the real Jesus: the Jesus, not of the Church Councils, and of the rigid uncharitable creeds, and of the wranglings, and the persecutions, but the Jesus of the Sermon on the Mount, and of the kindly Galilean days, before that the intolerant spirit of the Pharisee, Saul, wove into those controversial epistles of Paul so much of the Pharisaic teachings and speculations of Gamaliel, whose spiritual child he had been before that fateful day on the Damascus road, and from whose overmastering influence he never became quite emancipated.

Christian theology is Paul: and Paul is Gamaliel and The Old Law. When the three years of meditation and study "in Arabia" were over, Gamaliel and The Law had triumphed. Christianity as evolved by Paul was simply the Old Covenant readjusted and adapted

to new environments. Read the Epistles to the Romans, and to the Hebrews: it is still the Holy of Holies: still the High Priest: still the blood sacrifice as an atonement for sin-guilt: only, now, instead of once a year, it is once for all: a change of times: that is all. The theory remains the same: the sources, the same: the mode, the same. All this, Judæism has discarded. The Christian, by a strange turn of events, is now the lineal inheritor of the Old Covenant. The Jew is the Gentile: the Christian is the Jew. No stranger turn of events is to be found in the history of the human soul. And Jesus has won the Jew: whether the Jew realizes it or not, Jesus has won. The spirit of his teachings has permeated the whole race-life. That night when with clasped hands I stood face-to-face with my friend, Rabbi Myers, it was not the Old Law, not the Levite, not Sinai, that I saw. I looked into eyes that were filled with the great, broad kindliness and love of Jesus, the Christ. It was the Sermon on the Mount: and it was: "Brother!" And yet by the creeds he was a doomed and lost soul. God!—can we believe it? Even Paul shrank back from the merciless conclusions of his own logic: "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew." *Romans XI:1, 2.*

I realize that today I stand with my kin back in the simple faith of Mamre, and of the old tent-life, and the stars—and God! *Shalom!*

*And Judas?* Is any soul hopelessly lost so long as any impulse to good remains?—That soul is not dead.

This is life, the still-lingering spark of spiritual life! Who shall say that the smoldering spark may not again be revived into a flame? And remorse?—what is it but the repenting, self-reproaching soul still alive? Judas had remorse—bitter, agonizing remorse: "Then Judas, who had betrayed Him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself." *Matthew XXVII:35.* This is not death. It is life—keen, active, spiritual life. Shall it be said of the body alone that, "While there is life, there is hope"? Did mercy for the blood-stained end with the robber upon the cross? Was there no more? Or have we again failed to fathom the depths of God's mercy? Judas repented.

JUDAS

Lost! Lost! Lost!
Alone, and in the dark!
Only the blackened shadows
Of night; and all about me,
Flitting as bats in the gloom,
Hideous, and vile, and loathsome,
The evil ghosts of the damned.

Am I become as these?
I, who walked with the Master
Long summer days, where the lilies

Made golden the sunny hill-sides?
Am I, too, only a shadow
Hideous, and vile, and loathsome?
And have the day and the sunshine
No longer place for me?

Lost! Lost! Lost!
My hand betrayed the Master.
My kiss—through countless ages
Men of the years unborn
Will tell of the kiss of Judas.

Lost! Lost! Lost!
Afraid of the gleam of the fireside,
And the babe in the arms of its mother,
Afraid of myself; and the heart
Blackened and vile within me.

Master! Pitying Christ!
Is there no hope for me?
Thou saidst, I were better unborn.
But, oh, in hardness and hate
The breath of life came to me:
And I—I hated, and back
Gave scorn and bitter reviling
To the world that hated me.

Master! Pitying Christ!
Harken a moment, and turn,
Only a single moment,
Ere I go to my doom.

Master, there was one spot,
One little spot untainted,
Down in the black, vile depths
Of that sore heart: and thine,
All thine it was; but the battle
Was sore upon me: and then—
Oh, that no mother had borne me!—
One day the old, hard life
Swept back as a flood upon me,
Bitter, and hard, and sullen:
And I—as one in the clutch
And grip of the sea's grim maw—
A moment, and I was gone!

But, pitying Christ, remember,
When thou art come to thy kingdom,
That once that spot was thine,
That one, lone, tender spot
In a heart as bitter as sin,
And hard as the nether mill-stone.

Mercy I dare not ask:
But some time in the Hereafter,
Some longing, tender hour
When thou dost think of the days,
And the old walks, by the sea,
Drop one pitying tear
On that lone spot in a heart
Hard with the world's hard hate:
For that one lonely spot
Somehow had learned to love thee.

*And Jesus?*—"Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times. Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but until seventy times seven." *Matthew XVIII:21, 22.* Are we to believe that He meant it only for others, and that He alone could not forgive? Do we even yet know the depths of the heart of Jesus?

*And God?*—"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." *Psalm LI:17.*

When the Books are opened, this must stand—Judas repented.

# X

# WHY DID JESUS COME?

I WOULD not have this chapter misunderstood. It is not intended as an attack upon the faith of anyone who may take unlike view among the many different tenets men have held upon these moot points of Christian doctrine. The chapter simply aims to show that there are reasonable grounds for such differences of opinion, and that unlike heredity, or unlike environment, or personality, or mentality, may account for any or all; and yet each thoroughly honest and sincere in his belief: and that with these facts in view, men and churches may well relegate such differences to the class of non-vital issues; may recognize a common brotherhood; may find fellowship in church work; and with mutual respect for each other's opinions: and may labor together, kindly, cordially, and forbearingly for God and for the uplift of humanity. It is a plea for a church fellowship broad as humanity, yet deep as the deep things of God.

## *What Says the Old Testament?*

Why did Jesus come? Does the Old Covenant Record throw any light upon this question?

That there existed among the Hebrew people, and especially after they had passed the zenith of their

national power, and decadence had set in, a belief in the coming of someone who was to bring back the glories of the earthly kingdom of Israel, is shown in the prophecies of Isaiah, and of others, on to the close of the prophetic era. Contemporaneously with this belief, and side-by-side with it, there seems to have existed, among the more spiritually minded, a belief of a great moral and religious regeneration which also was to come. And the two beliefs apparently fixed upon the one personality as the active agent in race uplift, and also in this spiritual regeneration. Yet that the recorded forecastings of the Prophets are clear, and free from ambiguity, can hardly be claimed, and especially in view of the fact that Hebræism, itself, has never seemed to be able to agree upon a common understanding. In the earlier centuries of the Jewish political decadence, and even up to the coming of Jesus, the prevailing view seems to have been that of a political and racial restoration; and this was the spirit of expectant inquiry in which his coming was met: and it was because of the failure of this hope that they turned from him. In the long ages which have elapsed since, and in the gradual dying out of that hope, the Hebrew seems to have closed his eyes to the other phase, the spiritual regeneration. It has blinded him to the moral and spiritual worth of the words, the life, and the broadness of Jesus of Nazareth, who stands as the last, and the greatest, of the teachers that have been born to Judæism. Possibly it was the broadness that repelled them; for the Jew, while intense, has never

been broad: and men of the type of Jesus belong to no race or faith; they are the heritage of humanity.

The forecastings of the one who was to come as the regenerator of Israel are largely contained in the Book of Isaiah: so much so that he has been termed the Messianic Prophet. There are also allusions to this belief of Hebræism to be found in the books of Jeremiah, of Daniel, of Zechariah, of Micah, and of Malachi, but vague in character as to the possible personality, and as to the exact purpose of his coming. The Book of Isaiah contains some twelve allusions which are claimed as foretelling, or foreshadowing, the fact, and somewhat of the purpose, of the coming: but that they are marked by the clearness and definiteness which would naturally be expected upon a topic of so great prospective importance, can hardly be claimed. It is only as retrospectively interpreted in the light of events occurring ages afterward that they may be considered as possible corroborative evidence. Nor are these prophecies free from inconsistencies and self-contradictions. For instance, in Isaiah IX:6, he who is to come is spoken of as the "Mighty God, the Everlasting Father": yet in the same Book, Chapter LII:13, and manifestly concerning the same one, God speaks of him as "my servant"; and again, in LIII:11, as "my righteous servant"; and again, in XLII:1, God says of him, "Behold my servant": but he is one upon whom the Spirit of God is to rest—XI:2, and LX:1. These passages are so entirely contradictory as to the nature of the personality of him who is to come that they cannot be reconciled with each other.

Chapter LIII of Isaiah has been especially held as foretelling the coming of such a Redeemer to Israel, and as further identifying Jesus as that one. Yet a fatal defect has apparently been overlooked, or ignored. Verse 10 says of the one who is to come, "he shall see his seed"; but Jesus left no progeny: hence the prophecy could not apply to him. It has been claimed, however, by at least one commentator, that by "seed" was meant, "true converts, genuine Christians." But the Hebrew word made use of will not admit of this rendering. The word is *Zera,* from the primitive root *Zara,* "to sow," "to plant." It is found some two hundred and twenty times in the Old Testament. The word is always made use of in a material sense, and of material things—plants, seeds, fruit, offspring: never, in a single case, is it made use of figuratively, or with a secondary meaning. There has been too much freedom in the application of these old prophecies. It seems to be upon the ground that the end justifies the methods. But the more obscure the prophecy, the more careful should be the scrutiny in the attempted application.

Yet in it all this much would seem to be clear: that Israel was expectantly looking forward to the advent of someone who was to come as a teacher and uplifter of righteousness, and with a message of peace: and it is to these passages that Jesus appeals as proof that in him is fulfilled the old-time prophecy, and as incidentally throwing light upon the purpose of his coming. And yet, after all, it is not to the old prophecies, but to the words of Jesus himself, that we must turn, if we would seek authoritative information as to why he

came: for he surely must have known his own inner life, and the motives and purposes of his mission among men. What does Jesus himself say about this? And what is the testimony of his life?

### *What Says the Record of His Life?*

Born of humble parents, his life was spent almost entirely among the lowly: so much so that he remained unnoted in contemporaneous history. And for the magnitude of the issues held to have been at stake, the record left of him by even his immediate followers is meager: so meager that it stands as a matter of historical surprise. This may be explained, however, by the humble, and manifestly untrained, character of those whom he gathered about him as his disciples and apostles: and that they did not foresee the magnitude of the issues to which his life and teachings would give rise. Of Peter and John, who stand as leaders among the Twelve disciples, it is said: "And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marveled." *Acts IV:13.* Until the accession of Saul of Tarsos, the Paul of Acts, and of the Epistles, no one of liberal education or of trained mind, unless possibly Luke—who was not of the immediate following, and who does not seem to have personally met Jesus—appears to have left written word: and Paul writes, not as an eye-witness, for he also seems never to have personally known, or to have seen Jesus: and his writings are thus not a first-hand record of the life, or of the words, of Jesus, but are only

hearsay, or surmise, or theories, as to the scope and the intent of his teachings.

From the birth of Jesus up to the time of the beginning of his public ministry, at supposedly thirty years of age, his life-record has little that is definite—some scenes of vague prophecies; his circumcision as a Jew; some family narratives, yet scanty; some irreconcilable clashings of Matthew and Luke as to the events, the places, and the times, following his birth and on through the years of infancy: from himself, nothing. His first public appearance is when he comes to John at Jordan, seeking baptism: why, is not made clear: only as conforming to a customary Jewish rite. A record of the working of some miracles follows. Then he breaks the personal silence in the synagogue at Nazareth, when he links himself to the chain of the Prophets of the Old Covenant, as in lineal succession: and in doing so incidentally throws a side-light upon the purpose of his coming. The following is the scene as given by Luke: "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias—["Esaias," Septuagint; "Isaiah," King James Version]. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable

year of the Lord.' And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened upon him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." *Luke IV:16, 21; Isaiah LXI:1, 3.*

And again, when John, in prison, sends envoys to him to ask as to his personality, his reply is not of himself, but of his works and his mission: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." *Matthew XI:4, 5.*

The scenes and the words here given are chiefly of value as showing the line of the work which he thus far assumes to himself; for he gives them as characteristics. It is the kindly, sympathetic, helpful life of one such as Peter describes him to Cornelius: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." *Acts X:38.*

One more linking with the past is shown, by inference, however, in the Sermon on the Mount, when he says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil, for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." *Matthew V:17, 18.*

That Jesus was well versed in the Old Law, and

that his life was lived under its rules, and that to the last he still felt himself, as a Jew born, to be subject to its commands and its rituals and restraints, is shown in the strict conformity with its rites, and in the obedience to its ceremonials; the baptism; the attendance, "as was his wont," upon the synagogue service of the sabbaths; the annual going up to the Passover feast at Jerusalem; the scrupulous keeping of the Paschal Supper: and his careful observance of its forms. There is in it all no departure from the ritualistic life of an orthodox Jew. And he calls himself, "Ο Διδασκαλος," "The Teacher." He seems to have still looked upon himself only as a Reformer of Israel: even as one of the old Prophets, with no thought of anything more. Yet there was, withal, a line of spiritual cleavage slowly setting in between Old and New.

It begins to show itself more plainly when half-way through his public ministry: and the change is indicative of the mental and spiritual change in Jesus himself. The first half of his public ministry is full of the hope, the courage, the cheer, of one to whom all things are possible: one to whom the thought of failure has not yet come. It is the peaceful life by the blue waters of Galilee: the kindly fisher-folk, who "leave all and follow him": the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee: the days of Nathaniel, the "man without guile," for the evil days of Judas were not yet: the scene of the soul-hungering Nicodemus, and the lesson of the night-winds; the Samaritan woman by the well at Sychar, and the "Living waters": and then the quietly restful hush of the Sermon on the Mount with its Beatitudes,

with its simple, trusting prayer; the birds that toil not; the lilies of the hill-side, richer hued than Solomon in all the bravery of his Tyrian vesture; and, withal, the kindly injunction to the care-worn faces about him, "μη μεριμνατε—["Be not anxious!"]—if your Heavenly Father careth for these, will he not care also for you?"

It is all an old-time dream of peace, a restful idyl in the soul-life of a weary world, when for a little space the wearing stress is laid aside. It is the after-glow of the days of Abraham and Mamre. Men—tired, worn men—look back to it as they look back to the old tent-life under the stars. But it did not last. There came a change. Read between the lines, and it is all there. The Scribes and the Pharisees, who had looked for the coming of a High Priest, and the further upbuilding of sacerdotal power, turned from the humble wayside teacher, whom yet they feared; and, turning, plotted to destroy. The throng that had followed him for the dole of bread, turned back from the "Bread of Life." The ambitious who had looked for the Sword of David, and the throne, rejected the uncrowned king who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." And with this began the life of homeless wandering. Cast out from the synagogues, he taught by the wayside. He seems also to have become alienated from his own kin, "for neither did his brethren believe in him." *John VII:5.*

And he felt it, the isolation, the homelessness: felt it with all the keenness of a sensitive nature. Read again between the lines, and it is there. When the throng which had followed him for bread, turned back

and fell away, he says piteously to the Twelve, as one whose faith is staggered, "Will ye also go away?" *John VI:67.* And again, when the scribe would have followed him, he sadly replies: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." *Matthew VIII:20.*

Yet there was one home still open, the little house at Bethany, where Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus lived. In the trips up to Jerusalem, as the end drew near, here he lodged when night-fall came: and here he was welcome. It was humble, very humble; but love was there.

### *The Field*

That Jesus, at the first, felt he was sent to the broadness of a world mission, does not appear: rather, like the Prophets of old, as a reformer and an uplifter to Israel: for it is still, "God's chosen people": still the Children of the Covenant. It was still Judæism, wrapped up and bound within itself. And it is this narrow field to which his attention is confined. And it is as a reformer and a reclaimer to a straying people that he feels commissioned. When he sends out the Twelve to their mission, it is said: "He commandeth them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." *Matthew X:5, 6.*

And again, when the Syro-Phœnician mother beseeches him for her sick daughter, he replies: "I am

not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." *Matthew XV:24.*

In accordance with this understanding, his life is spent in the narrow field of the Valley of the Jordan, and about the shores of Galilee, with the yearly journey, as a devout Jew, up to the ceremonial at Jerusalem: a little country about twenty-five by a hundred miles in extent, and entirely within the homeland of the Jews.

Yet, a broader vision seems to have come to him in the second half of his public ministry: and it came, as so often to man, through disappointment. It is the bitter ministry of broken hopes, and of pain. With Jesus it is not seemingly the disappointment of one who had foreseen rejection and failure. It is sometimes assumed that he foreknew all this. That would not be disappointment. It is rather the disappointment of one who had expected, or at least hoped for, a different result. The whole tone of his discourses betrays this. And the bitterness of the disappointment shows itself in the tone of his public ministrations. The cheerful, hopeful spirit of the earlier parables, and of the Sermon on the Mount, gives place to a sharper, sterner, more rebuking tone. All is not well. It is now of the tares in the wheat, the wicked husbandmen, the one without the wedding garment, the sower and the wasted seed, the foolish virgins who are not prepared, the rich young man who fails of eternal life, the buried talent, the sheep and the goats at the Judgment Day—it is of these he speaks. And then the lamenting cry over obdurate Jerusalem: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest

the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. *Matthew XXIII:37, 38.*

And there comes now a fiercer denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees, and their untrue lives. The rift between Jesus and his own race-blood is widening into a chasm which threatens to engulf him: for they bitterly resent it. At first they had made guarded inquiry: then they held aloof; now they seek to destroy. It is too often the fate of the would-be reformer. The world does not take kindly to the tale of its shortcomings.

### *And His Kin?*

"And they said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about upon them who sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." *Mark III: 32, 35.* With humanity there would be the heart-ache of alienation back of that reply.

And with it all a growing sadness begins to show itself in the life of Jesus. He feels the foreshadowing of the doom. It gives a somber tinge to the discourses with his disciples. The isolation and the outlawry are telling upon a sensitive nature. He talks of his impending death. He goes much apart to pray. He had prayed

before, but with no intimation of a difference from the devout prayers of any other who lifts his heart to God: apparently the supplication for support and guidance; and the heart-cry for close communion with the All-Father. But the time comes when there is a change. A new note is heard. It is now in agony. It is the cry of one wrestling with a great heart-wrecking pang. It is the death-struggle of a soul. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet there is no spirit of rebellion. "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" It is submission. But it is the submission of a breaking heart. There is here no note of divine strength: not even of some super-human strength. It is the suffering, agonized, supplicating cry of human weakness. Yet it is only the prelude to that other bitter, dying cry, when at last the tense heart-strings have snapped: "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" *Matthew XXVII:46.*

It has been claimed that Jesus knew from the first that Israel would turn away, and refuse to receive him: that he knew his work among them was foredoomed to failure: and that the death upon the cross was an essential part in a far-reaching plan, formulated long before, and so inevitable. To assume this, is to assume that in his prayers he was not sincere, but only acting a part. It is to assume that he was capable of dissimulation, unworthy of God, or of Man. Are we willing to admit this? Does Christianity dare admit it? Yet assume or admit the premise, and no other conclusion can be drawn. It is logically decisive.

The spiritual evolution of the second portion of the

public ministry of Jesus appears more especially in the Gospel by John, the Mystic of the Twelve; for this Gospel, unlike the others, is not so much a record of events, but rather the elaboration of a theory, and dwells largely upon the symbolic phases of the words of Jesus. Note these:

"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." "Ye must be born again." "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit." *John III.* "I am the living bread which came down from heaven:" . . . "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." *John VI.* "I am the door of the sheep." . . . "I am the good shepherd." *John X.* "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." *John IV:14.* "I am the resurrection and the life." *John XI:25.* "Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." *John VIII:51.* "I am the light of the world." *John IX:5.* "I am the true vine." *John XV:1.* "I am the way, the truth, and the life." *John XIV:6.*

In John, little is said by Jesus as to why he came: but much stress is placed upon his commission from God, and that he came to do, not his own will, but the will of God Who sent him. The central thought seems to be, the acceptance of Jesus as the divinely authorized representative of God. Yet, beyond belief in the divine

commission of Jesus, little is said as to what the will of God may be: and religion is made a matter of belief, rather than a life.

But back of the teachings, back of the slighted claim to recognition of a divine commission, back of the thought of the spiritual regeneration of Israel—and as these were more and more ending only in disappointment—another thought begins to show itself in the second half of the public ministry of Jesus. That it was not clearly defined, however, is shown by the fact that after nineteen centuries of controversy men are still not able to come to an agreement over it. The thought was: That in himself was somehow to be finally fulfilled that old ritualistic idea of a compensatory blood atonement for sin-guilt. Yet it is left largely a matter of inference; for that the thought is clearly and definitely expressed, or the manner of it made plain in his words and teachings, can hardly be claimed in the face of the fact just alluded to, that for nineteen centuries, men—honest, sincere, capable men—have not been able to come to an agreement over it: and that today they are as far apart as ever in their views. The question split the Church of the first few centuries into contending factions; it brought in the strife of arms, and of civil war; it gave excuse for the dungeon, the fagot, the stake; it crippled Christianity in its efforts at the uplift of the human race: and now, after the nineteen centuries, devout, true men are still as unable to find some common ground of agreement as they were in the beginning. It still remains a matter of disputed inference, and not an accepted fact.

This topic of a blood atonement for sin has already been treated of in the chapter, "The Theory of a Blood Atonement for Sin," so that it is scarcely necessary to repeat the discussion here, only in so far as to throw light upon the question of the purpose of his coming.

### *Why Did Jesus Come?—His Own Answers*

The record of the life and death of Jesus is singularly destitute of direct statement as to this question. The purpose has rather to be inferred from the nature of the work which he did, and from the bent of his teachings. He makes some eighteen allusions to himself and his mission. Of these, fourteen deal with his sufferings, and his rejection by men, but do not throw light upon the reason for his coming, or upon that other question of his death as a sacrifice. Concerning himself he says: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *John III:14, 16.*

And again he says: "And I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me." *John XII:32.* How, and Why, this was to be brought to pass is not explained; any theories deduced therefrom, or built thereon, are only matters of inference. He simply did not say. Once again he says: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." *Matthew IX:*

*13.* This throws some light upon his own view of the nature and extent of his mission to men. Not to all: but a reclaimer of the straying. It is a limitation.

And once, and only once, and this in the scene of the last Paschal Supper, he speaks of his blood as the seal of a New Covenant. As he gives the cup of wine to the Twelve Disciples who have followed him, he says, "This cup is the New Testament—["η καινη διαθηκη"—"covenant," "compact"]—in my blood, which is shed for you." *Luke XXII:20.*

In the account given by Mark, he says, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many." *Mark XIV:24.* The Greek text is, "ὑπερ πολλῶν," "for many"; not, "ὑπερ παντῶν," "for all." It is a limited and guarded statement, and throws light upon his words when he says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Put this side-by-side with his words in Luke XV:7: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons, which need no repentance"; and by Psalm XXVI; and by the side of that old record of Enoch in Genesis V:24; and of Melchizedek as given in Genesis XIV:18, and as elaborated in Hebrews VII; and a curious line of thought is opened up as to those who would seem to need no repentance, and, inferentially, no redemption. *Does it all mean that a human soul may walk with God from the beginning, and never depart from Him?* Have we yet grasped the broadness of God's laws?

Matthew adds one more clause to the account; but in this he stands alone: "This is my blood of the New

Testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins"—["εις αφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν"—"to the putting-away of sins"]. He gives no explanation, no comment. Each soul is left to draw its own conclusions: and the conclusions have been many, and varied, and too often conflicting. John is silent as to the whole scene, which is singularly noticeable when we consider his keen insight as the mystic of the Twelve, and that he is the one who especially notes and makes record of the more spiritual occult teachings of Jesus.

These texts allude to two things—a covenant—and the remission of sins. Jesus gives no explanation of either, beyond the mere words of the text. But as he speaks of this as a New Covenant, an explanation would reasonably seem to lie in a contrast with an Older, and thus superseded, covenant. And this older covenant would presumably be found in the Old Testament, or Covenant, record. The word covenant is made use of many times in that record, and under varying circumstances as to persons and purposes: covenants between men; between tribes; between nations; covenants about lands; about peace or war; covenants of alliance; and covenants between God and man; or between God and tribes or nations. The word made use of is always the same—*bereeth,* "a compact," or "agreement"—binding upon both parties. It was customarily, but not always, sealed by the offering of a sacrifice to God, thus calling upon Him to witness the transaction: and ordinarily, but not always, this sacrifice involved the shedding of blood.

From the fact that the covenant specified by Jesus

as the New, in contradistinction to the Old, was announced at the yearly Passover Feast, with its ritualistic shedding of the blood of the Paschal Lamb, it has generally been associated with that rite. Yet reference to the institution of the Passover, as given in Exodus, and in Deuteronomy, shows that this feast was not instituted as the seal of a covenant, nor was it indicative of a remission of sins, but was purely a memorial service: "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial: and ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever" . . . "And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." *Exodus XII:11, 17, 26, 28; Deuteronomy XVI:1, 8.*

In Deuteronomy XXVI:16, 19, is reference to a covenant between God and Israel: but it is not sealed with blood, but made in connection with the yearly offering of the first fruits, and solely between Israel, as a "peculiar people," and their God. The thought of a covenant with God seems to have pervaded the whole after-life of Israel, but as a covenant purely tribal in character. It is the lineal successor of the covenant with Abraham as given in Genesis XVII:2, 14, which was sealed with the rite of circumcision.

The thought of a New Covenant, however, appears in Jeremiah XXXI:31, 34: yet again it is a covenant strictly tribal in character, as between God, and Israel and Judah: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord,

that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt: which covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more."

It would apparently be to this prophecy that Jesus refers when he speaks of the New Covenant, and he gives no word to indicate a broadening out of that covenant beyond the old tribal lines. More than this is assumption.

The phrase, "to the remission of sins," which is only given by Matthew, but not by Mark or Luke, has no added words to indicate the manner of the remission, or to show whether to Israel solely, or whether of broader scope. The doctrine of a general application to the whole human race is again an inference. His words do not show. And how the remission? Whether a compensatory blood-price paid to heal a broken law —or whether an offering to placate an angered Deity —or whether as an example of the supreme altruistic sacrifice—he did not say. Let it rest. God has not

spoken the final word. Possibly eternity may bring answer.

Yet it is a matter of surprise that, of a doctrine held to be of such supreme moment, there should be so little mention in the words of Jesus himself; and that so much has been assumed only by inference: for it is almost entirely by inference from these few words, and by linking them on to the older Hebræic altar sacrifice, that the whole theory of the blood atonement for sin through the death of Jesus upon the cross has been built up. "For the remission of sins"—five words—and these unnoted by the other three of the four sole narrators of the scene: and this, only as one of "the Twelve" remembers the saying after many years! It would seem to be a narrow foundation for a doctrine of such far-reaching potentialities, and which has become the very foundation-stone of Christian theology.

Put these five unsupported words by the side of the age-long, and ever-repeated, assurance in the Old Covenant Record, of God's pledge to forgive the repentant sinner, and to blot out his transgressions that they may be remembered no more forever: and this without price: only the loving heart of the All-Father yearning over his straying children! The contrast is startling. And it is to be noted that even these five words do not come to us at first hand, for Jesus seems to have left no written record of his teachings. Indeed they come to us, as said, only as the recollection of one man, who writes years after the occurrence of the events which he undertakes to narrate: and what he gives is only his recollection of teachings which are then beginning to

grow dim in the minds of men. When this laxity of record is contrasted with the scrupulous care shown in the preservation of the Old Covenant Record—the graven tablets, prepared at the time of the Covenant-making—the Ark of the Covenant, as a receptacle for safe keeping—the zealous, and jealous, guardianship of a special hereditary sacerdotal class; and back of them a highly gifted people whose whole racial life centers about "The Law"; when this comparison and contrast is made of the difference in the precautions taken to preserve and pass on unchanged so vital a point of religious faith, their comparative reliability as authority for the basing of creeds is at once manifest.

*Five unsupported words, and the passing scene of an evening,* as against Mamre, and the rude altar of stone out under the stars, and two thousand years of slow spiritual evolution and faith upbuilding! These words may seem harsh: they may seem irreverent: but they are not so intended. Only, that we may face facts as they are; and that doctrines based so largely upon inference, or assumption, and this from so narrow a foundation, must inevitably admit of much dissent, and so should not be held as dogmatic in the faiths of the world. It is a plea for a broader charity toward those who may see God's dealings with the human soul in a different light. We be Brethren!

What, then, is clear as to the purpose of the coming of Jesus of Nazareth? Upon what do men agree? They agree upon these points: The moral teachings—the kindly, helpful life—the broad humanity—the charity and the love—the light upon the pathway through the

Valley of the Shadow: and beyond—the strict accounting for the deeds done in this life—and, over all, the loving face of the All-Father, Who would not that any should perish, but Who hears the cry of the broken-hearted and the sorrowing; and Who forgives, and takes back the repentant prodigal, even as did that earthly father of whom the Master spake. And *these* are human life. These mean dwelling together in amity, nations at peace. And these are the great, broad, open pathway into the Hereafter. And are not these enough? And may we not wait for further light until God shall see fit to send it? For this is enough to bring peace to a shattered world: to lift up the fallen: to make clean the soiled lives: to heal the sin-sick hearts of men.

That it is the Sermon on the Mount, and the "Two Great Commandments," and the kindly human life of "The Teacher" by the shores of Galilee, which today give color and spirit to Christianity, rather than Calvary and the Cross, can scarcely be questioned. This much is clear: That Calvary, and the blood atonement for sin-guilt, are fading from the hearts of men as theological abstractions: while Sinai and that Old Law, and the Sermon on the Mount, and the kindly life, and the "Father, forgive them," are growing clearer and brighter as the years merge into the centuries. And upon these all men may stand, and clasp hands in a world-wide brotherhood that looks up into the calm face of the One All-Father. Why not search for the things upon which we may all agree, rather than for the points of difference? Would not the clasped hands

be more pleasing to God, better for humanity, rather than the averted faces and the estranged lives?

And the Master—He loved all. No hungry soul ever found his face turned away. It is the great, compassionate heart of Jesus of Nazareth. And the downcast, and the broken, and the sin-stained, have found him. But it is the Jesus of the old walks by the shores of Galilee; Jesus, the kindly Elder Brother, who brought anew from the All-Father the hope and the promise of better things.

### *Other Answers*

Theologians may differ: but a sinful woman found answer:

MAGDALENE

I

Unclean! Unclean!
It was only the glance of his eye:
A moment he looked at me
As I stood amid the throng
By the gate when he entered in.
But in his eye I saw,
As one in the clear, blue lake
Can see the hills beyond,
I saw the home by the brook,
And my mother at the door,
And me, a child at the knee,
Clean, and good, and true:

And then I saw the years,
And the wayward days, and all
Of the life of straying and sin.
But the eye, it pierced me through,
And I knew that he had seen.

A moment—he passed me by:
But not in scorn or hate:
Only a pity, deep
As the waters of Galilee.

I turned me and fled: and plucked,
Running, the baubles that decked
Neck, and arms, and hair,
And flung them from me afar,
The hire of my sin and shame.

Unclean!
The leper beyond the gates,
Straying amid the tombs,
Is kin—and the loathsome scabs,
The ulcers that eat and eat
Down to marrow and bone,
The fingers that rot and drop
Until hands are hideous paws
As the shambling mountain-bear,
The feet that thicken and swell
Until hoofs they seem to be.

Unclean!
Brother thou art to me!—
Me, the leper within.
For us no healer's art
Has hope, or comfort, or cheer,
Outcast of men, and of earth,
Hopeless we walk the land,
The leper beside the gate,
The outcast Magdalene.

II

A strangely wondrous thing has come to me:
So strange that I could only stand and gaze
Awe-stricken. It was by the city gate
Where one goes down to Kedron, and beyond
Up the steep slopes of Olivet, and on
To Bethany beyond:

A beggar sat
Asking for alms: and yet the passers-by
Turned them away with sudden, hurried pace,
In dread and loathing; for the fatal scales
Of leprosy were on him. But his need
Had made him bold to wander from the tombs,
Those fearsome tombs beyond the Potter's Gate:
For he, too, in that scarred and rotting form
Knew what it was to hunger: and he begged
The daily dole of bread.

I stood and gazed:—
Homeless, and marred, and outcast, yet a man!
And then there came to me some far-off words

Heard when a child; some Rabbi with the Scroll,
Who read of days of Eden, and of man
Made in God's image: and my heart cried out:
Is God like this? or has some awful curse
Blasted a fair, pure form that was divine?

And then there came a sudden, gushing wave
Of pity to me: and I reached my hand
To give the dole he prayed for: but he shrank
Back from my touch with cry, "Unclean! Unclean!
"Cast thy kind dole upon the earth," he said,
"Nor come anear: but turn thee quick away,
I am a leper."

But with pitying touch
My hand met his: and in my sin I said,
"Nay Brother, I, too, cry, Unclean! Unclean!
I am a leper also, I, the Magdalene."

But even as I spake, one came adown
The narrow way, as he would pass beyond
Seeking the olive groves of Bethany,
And some still place to lay his weary head:
For he was bowed and broken, and a weight
Of some great load seemed on him as he walked,
Foot-sore and faint. And near behind him came
A little band of followers, with steps
Weary as his, the steps of homeless men.

And then again upon the evening air
The wailing cry uprose,

"Unclean! Unclean!
I am a leper: and the hand of God
Is sore upon me. Pass the other way,
And leave me to my misery and pain."

He heard that piteous cry. His saddened face
Took one more pain upon it: but no word
Came from the quivering lips: he silent stood,
Gazing away beyond the city walls,
Beyond the purpling hills of night-time, on and on,
I know not whither: but one moment brief
The world had dropped aside; he only saw
Vague, far-off distances, and still beyond,
Past the last star, some sight of men unseen.
His lips were moved in silent, wordless prayer
A little space: and then a tender light,
Full of compassion, touched the patient eyes,
As in a gentle, pitying voice he said,
"Be clean!"

"Be clean!"—and, lo, the loathsome scales
Were shed as snow-flakes from the fish-like skin:
The marred, seamed hands grew shapely, and the feet,
The feet that as great, clumsy hoofs had been,
Once more were lithe, and meet to walk the earth.

He turned to pass: but as he turned away,
His eyes fell on me where I shrinking stood;
I, with the curse of leprosy within,

Sin-stained and loathsome, I, the Magdalene.
Again that look, that wondrous, pitying look,
Pierced through and through me: and there came to me
Again the vision of those old, glad days,
The days when, sinless, as a child I stood
Beside my mother's knee.

I swayed and bent,
Torn with deep longing, blinded by my tears.
Oh, the old days, the soul-clean childhood days!
Oh, the glad sunlight on the village hills!
The purple shadows, that had naught of sin
To make them fearsome when the night-time fell!
Down in the dust I cast me, writhing, spent,
The battling over, only the foul wreck
Of purity that had been.

Yet once more
I longed to see his face, the one sole face
With pity in it, not the scorn of men.
Blinded with bitter tears, yet still I strove
To lift my eyes. Too late, for he had passed:
And I alone, within the gloom of night,
Loathsome and vile, a leper of the soul,
Outcast of God and man, the Magdalene.
And yet, oh yet, his eye had pity in it.
And yet, oh yet, he healed the leprosy
Of him who sat beside the city gate
Crying, as I, "Unclean! Unclean! Unclean!"

## III

### Spikenard

An old-time day;
And a worn man sitting him down to meat;
And a woman kneeling beside his feet
With a box of ointment costly and rare,
The while his feet, with her trailing hair
She wipes of the tears that tremble and fall
From eyes long dry: And over all
A perfume sweet as the winds that creep
Down from Lebanon, lying asleep
In the skylands far away.

. . . . . .

Across the drift of the ages dim
The scent of the spikenard comes floating in,
Mingled with smell of Syrian balm,
And the faint, sweet odor of Lebanon's pine:
And a voice is saying, "Where'er men dwell
The tale of the woman they still will tell:
And always, and ever, the tale will be,
She did it, she did it, for love of me."

. . . . . .

### Echo de Saeculis

"Though your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow:
Though red like crimson,
They shall be as wool."—*Isaiah I:18.*

# XI

# THE BASIC ONENESS OF ALL RELIGIONS

## What is Religion?

ETYMOLOGICALLY the word goes back to the Latin particle, *re,* "again," "back," "anew," and the root *lig,* which has the radical meaning "to bind," but which is only found in composition in our tongue, as in ligate, ligature, ligament, ligation. It would probably be found as a separate primitive word farther back: maybe in that old-time Proto-Aryan speech of our forefathers in the Mid-Asian highlands. Religion, then, etymologically, is something which binds anew. Broadly speaking, it is somewhat that brings man into harmony with God, and renews a broken tie. But what breaks that tie? What is it that takes man away from harmony with the God who made him? The spiritual sense of man says, "Sin." But what is sin? Again the answer of the spiritual sense is, "Violation of Divine Law." And religion is that which brings the sinful soul back into harmony with that law, and ties it there. It is the ligature between God and man: the renewed ligature. Yet in a wider analysis, sin involves more than this purely personal aspect, as its possibilities for harm do not cease with mere restora-

tion from a broken law. Sin has three phases, which may be thus summarized:

I. The broken law: We may readily concede that God, the Law-Giver, has the power, and we are taught to believe has the willingness, to forgive this breach of the law to a repentant sinner. It is the refusal to obey the divine behest—as the offence of the child who refuses to obey the earthly father.

II. But the sin against one's own soul! This involves as its sequence the impaired moral force, the lowered spiritual plane, the scar of the soul-wounding. That this can, so assuredly, be wiped out, may well be questioned. The scar is there, and the moral lowering. That the robber upon the cross, with his years of evil and bloodshed, might, as Jesus said, "be that day with him in Paradise," is not beyond credence; for he was repentant; and God has promised forgiveness to the repentant sinner. But that in Paradise he could stand upon the same plane as John, the pure-hearted mystic, is not conceivable. The old earthly soul-scars must be there: even as the years fail to obliterate the scars of the bodily marring. This must be an undying penalty of sin; else is the law of cause and effect abrogated; and a basic principle of being contravened. Eternity may possibly smooth over the marred surface, as time does the bodily wounding; but the scar is there: the tissue is never again quite the same.

III. But possibly that phase of sin which in the Hereafter must bring as its penalty the most poignant pang of all, is the thought of the harm done to others. No human being can live here upon earth without

wielding an influence, whether for good or for ill, upon the lives of those about him. Even the hermit cannot live to himself alone. And the crossing and recrossing of the varied threads of life weave a tangled web of existence which time surely, and eternity probably, cannot ever untangle. Possibly, as said, of all the pangs which may come to a saved soul, the most poignant will be when some maimed, blasted, scar-covered soul shall say: "Because of your sin, I sinned. Because of your misdeed, I fell. You were strong enough to turn, but I was not. And I never got back again."

And repentance is not reparation. It may possibly prompt to an attempt at reparation: but reparation is not always a possibility. The harm done may not be reparable: and it may abide. The past cannot be recalled. And no regret, no attempt at repair, may ever avail. This is the keenest sting to wrong-doing. Can it ever cease to haunt the wrong-doer? Can eternity cure remorse? Only oblivion could do this: and eternity is not oblivion; else is our faith only a plunge into the dark. For the wrong-doer there is no draught of Nepenthe held in promise.

Remorse! Or may it be that in that eternity I shall again have chance to right the wrong I have done to another soul: to bear the pain for him, or with him: and so, at last, my own soul stand clear? It may be so? How else shall I have peace, even before the Throne? Then, maybe, the final victory will have come, and the scar at last be smoothed away. I do not know. Only, I must so hope. Else would heaven itself be torture—for remorse would be there.

The three points which have just been given have vital bearing upon the question that now follows:

*Why Do Men Have Religions?*

Religions arise from a common causation: The desire to be free from sin—to be right with God—to be right with our fellow men. All races, all men, recognize the existence of a Divine Ruler, and that they are subject to His laws, with penalty for infraction, and reward for observance; and all recognize a moral duty to the fellow man. These are the causative factors; and they have to do with a humanity which is at heart the same wherever found, in all lands and in all ages. Having, then, the like types of men, and the common desire to a like end, the resultants should have many features common to all. It is the working-out of a general law to its logical and legitimate conclusion. And this law is one which is applicable alike to material and spiritual things. The detection of these common features is the basis of the botanist's classification in vegetable life. It is the basis of the zoologist's classification in animal life. And the broader the research, the more the analogies between types appear. It is the tracing from individual to species, from species to genus, until all life begins to approximate to one common type, and to oneness of origin. It is so we trace back through the multiplicity of languages to word-roots common to many, and slowly approximate to the one common mother-tongue of all the diversified languages of mankind: and through this to the basic oneness of men. We look, not at the variations, but at the roots. Declensions, conjuga-

tions, terminations, prefixes, vowel-sounds even, all drop aside. It is the strong, bony framework of the consonants we seek; it establishes the relationship.

Thus we generalize: and as the process of generalization goes on, and we trace back, we constantly find that the multiplicity of types narrows down, and oneness of type begins to draw near. Is the spiritual world an exception to the law? It does not seem to be God's way in His other works: His laws are always general. Shall not the law apply to the man spiritual, and to his various types of religion? We are beginning to see that there are factors common to all.

### *What Are These Common Factors?*

They may be thus summarized: God, the lawgiver; Man, subject to that law; Evil, in the active form of personal sin; an accounting to God for transgression of the law; a Hereafter; an award of good or ill, as the life may have been.

These factors are to be found in all religions: and they are the basic factors in all. Men differ as to the phases, and as to the methods, of the working-out of these factors to their logical end: but not as to the reality of the factors themselves. The search seems to have reached final facts. The after variations in methods of creedal evolution may be accounted for by environment, and the changing stages and types of race development. And the factors thus enumerated are, as stated, the very foundation-stones of all religions. With these factors as a working basis, the spiritual needs of man

are satisfied, and his moral uplift made possible. And further, with the recognition of this fact, *the brotherhood of all religions* becomes manifest. Some may have more light upon the pathway in the practical working-out, some may have less; yet all are walking by converging lines: and the end is the same, the kindly face of the one common All-Father, and all souls attuned to unison with Him. We be Brethren!

And the duty of brethren to each other? Is it not to mutually share such light as has come to each—for no man, no race, no creed, no religion, has a monopoly of Divine Truth, or is beyond learning from others.

There is an old triplet from Ennius, which Cicero quotes in *"De Officiis"*—"Concerning Duties." It floats down across the centuries with the kindliness of the balmy air of the Calabrian Mountains:

"Homo qui erranti comiter monstrat viam,
Quasi lumen de suo lumine accendit, facit.
Nihilo minus ipsi lucet, cum illi accendit."

["The man who to the wanderer kindly points the way,
Does as the one who from his own light giveth light.
To him no less the light because he kindled light."]

## The Testimony of the Faiths

### *Judæism*

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and now what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." *Micah VI:8.*

*Christianity*

"Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? And Jesus said unto him: Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." *Matthew XXII:35, 40.*

"Pure religion, and undefiled before the God and Father—[παρα τῷ θεῷ και πατρι]—is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." *James I:27.*

*Buddhism*

"To care for father and mother:
To cherish wife and child:
To give alms, and to live the righteous life:
To abhor sin, and to cease from evil:
To be long-suffering and meek:—
This is greatest of all."

—*Gautama.*

"A man should honor his own creed, but not blame his neighbor's creed."

"I pray, with all manner of prayer, for those who differ from me in creed, that they, following my right example, may with me attain unto eternal salvation." —*Asoka.*

*Islam*

"Not in praying to east and to west,
But faith in God and the Judgment day:
And the dole that is given for Allah's sake:
And the heart uplifted in prayer:
And the covenant kept, not broken:
And patience in day of stress:—
So is the heart that is true:
And so is righteousness."

—*Koran.*

"Whether a Believer—[Mohammedan]—a Jew, a Christian, or a Sabæan, he who believeth in God, the Last Day, and acteth aright, his reward is with his God: he should neither fear nor be grieved."—*Koran.*

Socrates before his judges: "Wherefore, O Judges, be of good cheer about death, and know this of a truth, That no evil can happen to a good man, either in life, or after death." (In the *Apologia.*)

Did not all these have light? And was it not divine?

And our own old-time Norseland folk?—"Fifty winters have I this folk ruled," says Beowulf—slain, battling for his people—as the death-damp gathers upon his brow; "kept mine own well: sought not treacherous war: swore not falsely: waited the appointed time. For all this, though sick with deadly wounds, I gladness now may have. The Ruler of men may not me charge with murder of kinsmen when my life shall depart from this body."

Was it of these Paul wrote?—"For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things

contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; which show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness." *Romans II:14, 15.*

Beowulf's conscience bare him witness; and in death it was peace.

### All-Fader

A sturdy Northland folk;
And the rim of a winter sea,
With the spume of the breakers flung
Afar by the winds of the waste—
Winds that bellow and shriek
And howl to headland and cape
Of a land as sturdy and strong
As the men who dwell in it.

And the great trees rock in the gale
As the surges tumble in,
Hurled by the wrath of a sea
That hath never a mete nor a bound:
And a sky that is leaden and gray,
Lashed by the scudding wrack
Of the wild November gales,
Where sea and land clinch arms
In a grapple of life and death:
And under the beech-wood shade,
The upward curling smoke
From homes that are nestled down
Close to the warm, deep breast
Of the snow-clad earth:

And out
From low-swung doors the gleam,
Ruddy and full of cheer,
Of the glowing winter fires.

And the skald, with harp-strings tense,
Sings of the brave old days;
Of men that are leal and true;
And women fair and kind;
And of sword and spear and shield;
And of winter seas, and the ships
With oars that bend to the stroke
And the swing of the rowers' song;
And the deeds and the ways of men.

And over all, from skies
Wide-domed, where the Æsir dwell,
All-Fader looking down,
Well pleased with the world and men.

And the heart of the world goes back:
Back from the devious ways;
Back from city and mart,
And the carved cathedral walls
With their tangle of creeds and forms,
To the old beech woods, and days
By the wintry Northland seas,
And the curling smoke of homes
In the forest glades, and men
Simple, and rude, and strong,
In days when the earth was young;

And a faith that only knew
The leal and brave; and, beyond
The arching skies of the world,
All-Fader; and here below,
His children, the Sons of Men.

For the heart of the world is old,
And worn, and weary of stress;
Weary of strife and creeds;
Weary of rites and forms;
Weary of prebend and priest,
And the swinging censer, and all
The earth-made shackles that bind
And fetter the hearts of men.

And, lo, All-Fader looks down:
And the Father's heart is kind;
For He loveth his children all.

Religion is righteousness. When the world learns this truth, the dividing-lines of Christianity, and Judæism, and Islam, and Brahmanism, and Buddhism, will fade away. There will be one religion, only one—Humanity striving to walk with God.

### *Religion versus Cruelty*

And here there is a common misapprehension which it may be well to answer. We are apt to attribute the barbaric cruelty of certain races to their religion. To this kind of reasoning, the Turk is cruel because he is

Mohammedan. But the argument proves too much: for by the same kind of reasoning, the Spaniard of the Inquisition was cruel because he was Christian: and still further, the Prussian of the World War was cruel because he also was Christian. The fact is, the Turk is cruel, not because he is Mohammedan, but because he is Tartar, the blood of Genghis Khan and of Tamerlane. It was to protect his homeland from the merciless raids of this blood that the peace-loving Mongol of China built the Great Wall. The Arab, also, is Mohammedan, but of Semitic blood, and he has ever proven kindly and chivalrous. Saladin, and his camels laden with snow from Lebanon to cool the fever thirst of his foeman, Richard, tells of the blood. The Spaniard of the Inquisition was cruel, not because he was Christian, but because he was of that dark Iberian blood of Southern Europe, the blood of the bull-fight, of the vendetta, of the Black Hand, of the Sicilian Vespers. It is the blood which for generations has made the South of Ireland a continual scene of violence. And so the Prussian of the World War was cruel, not because he was Christian, but because he was not German, the kindly Celto-German of the Rhineland, the German of music and poetry and art, but was of that cruder, mixed Slavo-Tartar blood of Eastern Europe, which has behind it a history of ages of cruelty and bloodshed. It is this that has made the Prussian the bane also of the Germanic peoples.

# XII

## A COMMON BASIS FOR CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

A DISTINCTION should be made between a church and a creed. They are often confounded: yet they are essentially, and functionally different. A church may be based upon a creed: yet they are not the same. A church is an association of men for certain moral and religious purposes: it is of this world in origin, in structure, in purpose, in working power: and its existence ends with this world. It is of, and for, and through man: but it is not man. It is to the religious side of man's being what the state is to the civic side—a method of community living and of community work: yet with this difference, arising from the difference in purpose and ends, that while the state has granted to it by the people certain mandatory, and at times coercive, powers, and embraces within its authoritative scope all the people of a land, the church is purely a voluntary organization upon the part of all its members, and is conceded no mandatory powers. Such powers have sometimes been usurped by churches, but always to the detriment of religion; and, in the end, of the church itself.

But while the state pertains to the whole community in its organization, its functions, and its powers, and while the church pertains only to that portion of com-

munity which voluntarily enters into its organization, a creed, in its higher and truer sense, pertains solely to the individual man. It is *Credo—I Believe.* A church may, in the loose, inaccurate speech of ordinary life, be said to have a creed. It is so that we speak of the Roman Catholic creed, the Episcopalian creed, the Presbyterian creed, or the Methodist creed. Yet, accurately speaking, these are only creeds of individual men, formulated out of their individual soul-experience, giving expression solely to their individual beliefs, but which by a majority vote of a Council have been set up as a standard and a test for other men who may desire to affiliate themselves with the proponents in church fellowship and church work. And the more specific the creed, the narrower the circle of those who can thus combine in that especial church organization: for the fewer in number will the individuals be found who can agree upon these more specific details.

A creed, then, may be defined as the mental summary of the relationship which each man supposes to exist between his individual soul and God. And it is simply *Credo—I Believe.* It is not *Scio—I Know.* It stops short of this. It is only, *I Believe.* And it is merely a verbal expression of an opinion held upon things which, in their very nature, necessarily lie within the realm of the unprovable. They may be realities. The proponent says by his creed that he believes they are. But they must, as belonging to the realm of the intangible, invisible, spiritual world, remain unprovable by any means which are within the power of man while he continues subject to the logical limitations of

the material world. Hence he may only say of things spiritual, *I Believe:* while another may, with equal right, say, "I also believe, yet in a different way: for to me the things of the spirit are seen in another light." And neither has right to condemn the other: for in their mental conceptions of these invisible and unprovable things of the spirit world, either may be right: and possibly neither.

Yet a creed is made the ordinary basis and test of church fellowship, and of church cooperation. But that this basis, as ordinarily laid down, is broad enough to be effective in the work which the churches have upon them in the battle with organized evil, and in the moral and spiritual uplift of man, is disproved by the number of feeble, struggling, rival churches everywhere jostling and crippling each other in fields overstocked with separate religious organizations, all strength and energy absorbed in the mere battle for existence, no surplus left for aggressive work; pastors and people discouraged and cast down. And it is all because of disputes and quibbles over what are really non-essentials in religious belief, and which yet bar from united action. And yet this is spiritual treason in the face of embattled evil. It was so that the rival sects of the Jews fought each other in the streets of Jerusalem while the soldiers of Titus were battering down the walls. And even among the stronger churches of the great centers there is much duplication of machinery and waste of resources. But there is a greater harm than all this. It lies in the mental and spiritual narrowing which is born of the narrowing of creeds. This is

a fruitful source of discord between people of the same race, and who are, theoretically at least, of the same general religious faith, dividing communities into rival and wrangling sects: and it comes also as a racial question between the various peoples of the earth, to render them intolerant of each other's beliefs, and to blind their eyes to the spiritual light others may have found.

Is there not, then, *some common ground of faith* upon which all men may meet—all men, of all religions—and whereon they may learn to recognize the common spiritual kinship and brotherhood of all religions, and the common Fatherhood of God, as the one All-Father of All Men; and to live in peace and goodwill upon earth? The first step to this would be the agreeing of all Christians upon some common basis of religious fellowship among themselves: and to do this frankly and openly, as they are commencing to do it now, though indirectly and surreptitiously. For Christianity is beginning to drop the non-essentials in practice, even while still retaining and affirming them in its creeds. But there is no use in thinking that the various Christian sects will ever unite by adopting the creed of some especial church or sect as the common basis of fellowship. That is not human nature. Each church has been holding out that kind of an olive branch for ages; but without avail. Union, if brought about, will be by a process of unloading, not by taking on. Non-essentials must be dropped, and religion stripped down to an absolute working basis. And this brings us face-to-face with the question—What are the essentials of religious belief: and what the non-essentials?

In seeking a solution to this question of what constitutes an essential, and what a non-essential, of religious belief, we have a safe and sane rule for guidance, and as a testing-stone. It is this: As God must, in the very nature of Deity, be absolutely just and fair, He must, in justice and fairness to man, make the essentials of the way of salvation plain to him; so plain that no honest, seeking soul shall be able to mistake. Not to do so, would be to hold man responsible where light is withheld: and this would not be even human justice. This was the great, equitable truth which the prophet saw when he said of the Way of Holiness: "The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." *Isaiah XXXV:8.*

If any created being could come to the Day of Judgment to stand before God, and could say, "I tried; but the way was not plain to me, for I am not wise; and so I failed," that soul would have just ground for protest against condemnation. Consequently any doctrine, or any view, upon which honest, inquiring minds are not able to agree, cannot be held as an essential. The prophet's statement is still stronger, even "though a fool." And further: Fairness to man, and to God as well, demands that in matters of such vital importance as salvation from sin, and from spiritual death, all essential facts should be established by direct testimony of principals, and not be left to the more dubious agency of hearsay or inference. Hearsay and inference may be made use of to corroborate, or confirm, points already enunciated by principals, but only to corroborate or confirm, not to propound. And it is equally just and

reasonable to suppose that God, with divine wisdom, and foreseeing as He must the vital necessity of absolute clearness upon essentials, would not leave any essential in such shape that question or doubt could become a possibility. Justice to man absolutely demands this: and man has just and justifying reason to reject as non-essential any and all points or doctrines presented for his belief which are not thus made so clear that no difference of opinion can arise.

Let us test some of the doctrines of Christianity, as formulated in its creeds, by this rule:

I. The Trinity: This doctrine, as shown in the chapter upon "The Doctrine of the Trinity," was not even formulated, or generally accepted or held, by the primitive Christian Church. A Church Council, convened by the Emperor Constantine at Nikaia, A.D. 325, nearly three hundred years after the death of Jesus, declared the doctrine, not of a Trinity, but of a Duality of the Godhead, Father and Son. There was widespread opposition to the doctrine, which was carried, however, by a majority vote backed by the imperial influence, but only after months of wrangling, and amid scenes of confusion and violence. Fifty-six years later, a second Church Council, convened at Constantinople, further elaborated this to the doctrine of the Trinity, by voting the Holy Spirit an entity and one of the Godhead. A long and bitter controversy followed the proclamation of the doctrine of the Trinity, as the individual churches were somewhat evenly divided upon the question; many churches, with many of the bishops, refusing to accept the doctrine. The strong arm of the

civil power was called in to force its acceptance; and it was only after a century of persecution and war and bloodshed that open dissent was crushed out, and the doctrine became a settled portion of the Church creed. That century of persecution and torture and bloodshed to establish the doctrine of the Trinity was the baleful forerunner of after ages of persecution and torture and bloodshed within the Church over other doctrines.

Yet the doctrine of the Trinity has never, at any period of the Christian Church history, received universal assent, and is now rejected by a large and intelligent denomination of Christians; beside the doubt which is constantly betraying itself within the ranks of the so-called orthodox churches. To the great preponderating masses of the non-Christian world it is simply a matter of curious, unintelligible wonder: a self-destructive mysticism which nearly twenty centuries of missionary labors have failed to make believable to them. Under the rules of the testing as laid down, belief in this doctrine must therefore be held as not essential to salvation, since honest, intelligent men have never been able in the past, and are not now able, to come to an agreement upon it: and, as not an essential to salvation, belief in it should not be held as a test for fellowship with other churches, or even as a suitable test for membership within the individual church.

II. The nature of the relationship which Jesus of Nazareth held to God: The controversy over this question dates from the days of Jesus himself. The Gospels are full of it. The Epistles continue the controversy. The Early Church was rent by it. The Council of

Nikaia, which first passed formally and officially upon the question, took its action, as already stated, amid scenes of confusion and violence to which the controversy led. The battle was waged over the two Greek words, ὁμοιοουσιον—[*homoiousion,* "like God"]—and ὁμοουσιον—[*homoousion,* "the same as God"]. It was followed by scenes of bitter persecution and bloodshed over the disputed point. The civil power was won over first to one side, and then to the other, in the long contest; and the dispute gained added bitterness through the rigors of the law. A century of violence left what is termed the Nikaine creed in the ascendency, and the Church committed to the doctrine that Jesus was *homousion,* "very God of very God" as the creeds word it, One with God the Father; and the anathema of the Church, backed by the strong arm of the civil power, lay upon any who might maintain otherwise. Yet, despite the anathema, and despite the dungeon, and the torture chamber, and the stake, the controversy has never, from that day to this, ceased to divide the Christian world. And in all these centuries, and now, those unable to assent to the dogma that Jesus was "homousion," "very God of very God," and one and the same with God, have been honest, and intelligent, and unquestionably seeking the Truth in good faith. And while they no longer have before them the dungeon and the fagot, they still have the religious ostracism born of an intolerant phase of Christianity.

Apply the test rule. Has the true relationship of Jesus of Nazareth to God been made plain? If it has, why this difference of opinion among honest, intelli-

gent seekers after truth through all these ages? And if it has not been made plain, could it under the rule of Divine fairness to man's soul, be made a basis for beliefs essential to the soul's salvation? And if not essential to salvation, should it be made a standard for recognition in Christian brotherhood?

III. The question of a vicarious atonement for sin through the death upon the cross: This also was one of the questions which rent the Christian churches in the first few centuries. And has the world, the honestly seeking world, ever been able, in all the ages since, and is it now able, to come to an agreement over the question? Nineteen centuries have now gone by, and the division of opinion is still as marked as it was in the years that more immediately followed Calvary. And today, after nineteen centuries of theological controversy, after the libraries of theological works which have been devoted to the discussion, men are as far removed from an agreement as ever: and churches which preach the teachings of Jesus deny the fact or the possibility of such vicarious atonement: and no man can doubt the honesty or the sincerity of those who dissent and deny.

And again the inquiry is fair and legitimate—Can a doctrine with this history of doubt and controversy, and with a world still as much divided in opinion upon the question as it was ages ago—can a doctrine with this history be said to be plain and clear? And if not, then the same fair rule of testing must unavoidably lead to its being rejected as a standard of belief or of church fellowship.

To recapitulate, then: these questions:

The nature of the Godhead, whether a Trinity, or a Unity?

The nature of the relationship which Jesus of Nazareth bore to God?

The possibility, or the impossibility of a vicarious atonement for sin?

These three questions, as belonging to the list of the unsolvables because of a lack of established facts from which to reason, cannot, under the test of Divine fairness to man's soul, be classed as articles of belief which are essential to man's salvation: for honest, capable seekers after Truth never have been able to come to an agreement over them, nor are they nearer to an agreement now. Under such circumstances, to make claim that belief in them is essential to salvation, and so to establish them as creed tests for church membership, or for mutual fellowship as between churches, would seem to be uncalled for, and unwise. Nor would it be in accord with the broader charity of Jesus himself; for when John said to him, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us. . . . Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us." *Luke IX:49, 50.*

Are there, then, no common grounds upon which men may meet in religious unity? The question involves in its answer the consideration of a second question, namely—What is the essence of religion? Religion may be defined as two-fold in its nature—a Belief, and a Life.

Let me repeat. It is when we pass beyond the field of the fundamentals which are the common basis of all religions, and upon which all men agree, and then enter upon the battle-ground of rival creeds, that we find at once a conflict of irreconcilable views, and upon what would seem to be a mingling of truth and error in all. And we find, whether because of heredity, or environment, or of training, or race, that what seems to one mind to be truth, is to another only error. Thus may be cited, as said, the doctrine of the Trinity, which, while admittedly incomprehensible, and in direct contradiction of the laws of reason, is yet by many of the creeds of Christianity held to be true.

But to the Jew, and to the Mohammedan, in fact to the Semitic race-mind, the doctrine is polytheism pure and simple, kin to the idolatries of so-called heathen lands, and a blasphemy from which the race-mind recoils. Some of the strongest affirmations of the Old Testament Scriptures are in irreconcilable conflict with the doctrine, while many of the fiercest denunciations of the Koran are directed against it. And even within the ranks of Christianity itself, the doctrine is rejected by large numbers of the most intelligent, in formal church organization: while the allied doctrine of a compensating blood atonement for sin-guilt is looked upon as one of the lingering superstitions of an old-time idolatry, and of human sacrifice. And on the other hand, it is so with the fatalism of Islam, and of the Farther East, and its congener, the predestination of Paul and of Calvin. To the proponents, these doctrines seem to be reasonable, and they see, or

claim to see, no conflict between them and the idea of a just God. Yet, to others these doctrines do not seem to be reasonable: and they do seem to be entirely irreconcilable with the idea of justice in a Divine Being.

I. The Belief: The essentials of religious belief may be judged of by reviewing the grounds upon which the world has been able to agree. These are: God—a Hereafter for man—man's accountability to God for the actions of this life—sin—repentance—Divine forgiveness—an award of good or ill for the deeds done here upon earth. Upon these primary concepts probably all men agree in their religious beliefs. They are the basic starting-points of the great religions of the world. And these primary ideas form the practical working basis of all church fellowships. They are the formative elements of religious and church union. It is only when we pass beyond these, and attempt to particularize, that divisions arise; namely—As to the essential nature of the entity of God—the time, place, and type of the after-life—the genesis of evil, and how it may be forgiven—the ritualistic rites and forms. It is these that form the grounds for religious and church dissensions, divisions, and antagonisms.

II. The Life: When Jesus gave that scathing rebuke to the Pharisees which is found in Matthew XXIII, it was not their beliefs that he condemned. The creed was not even brought into question. It was the life. And it was not even the ritualistic duties and forms; it was the "weightier matters of the Law," judgment—[χρισιν, "justice"]—mercy—[ελεος]—and faith —[πιστιν]. It was the practical application of the

rule which he had laid down before, "By their fruits ye shall know them." *Matthew VII:15, 20.*

And the world, with a great, saving commonsense, has always at heart judged religion by this test. The question is always, not, What did he believe? but, How did he live? It recognizes the fact that, even among professed Christians, the beliefs are many and conflicting, but that the standard of the religious life is one. Jesus himself makes the life the one supreme test in depicting the final judgment: "And they—[the dead]—shall come forth; they that have done good—[οι τα αγαθα ποιησαντες]—unto the resurrection of life: and they that have done evil—[οι δε τα φαυλα πραξαντες]—unto the resurrection of damnation." *John V:29.*

And again: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward—[αποδωσει, "give," "award"]—every man according to his works"—[κατα την πραξιν αυτου]. *Matthew XVI:27.*

And again, in that revelation which John, in exile upon the Isle of Patmos, says he received when in the spirit, the same lesson is impressed: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works—[κατα τα εργα αυτῶν, "The works of them"]. *Revelation XX:12.*

And again: "And behold I come quickly, and my reward—["μισθος," "award," "wages," "dues paid for work done"]—is with me, to give to every man accord-

ing as his work—[ὡς το εργον αντον εσται]—shall be." *Revelation XXII:12.*

What does it all mean? This: for the few, of more exalted soul outlook, the deeper things of the spirit: for the many, the great, toiling, ungrown masses, the daily life: for all, in the end, the opened books, and the works as the final gage of award. And it is Jesus himself, the bearer of the Divine Message, that sets the standard. Even among the Twelve there was only one spiritually gifted Saint John.

The constant tendency of theological evolution has always been to draw a sharper and ever sharper line of cleavage between creeds and sects, and to force church life farther and farther away from the daily life of the masses. It was to battle with this that the Prophets of the Old Covenant came; it was for this that Jesus came: to bring religion back to the people. If, then, the world, even the Christian world, cannot agree upon more than a few basic principles, namely—the existence of a Supreme Being, Maker of all things—a Hereafter for man—man's accountability to God for the deeds of this life—sin—repentance and Divine forgiveness—an award whether of good or ill for the deeds of this life: and if the old Prophets, as the mouthpiece of God, and if Jesus himself, last and greatest of all—if they laid down the character of the deeds done in the flesh as the true basis of the award for that future life, making this the supreme and final test, are we justified in going beyond this in our standard of requirements for church fellowship and interdenominationalism?

That the saner tendency in religion is to return to this simple basis, is shown in the searching indictment of creed-ridden, ritualistic Israel when the Prophet cries out a warning to put these aside, and instead of sacrifices, and offerings, and ritualistic formulas, to "Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment—[*mishpat,* "justice"]; relieve the oppressed; judge—[*shaphat,* "defend," "avenge"]—the fatherless; plead for the widow." *Isaiah I:16.*

And again comes a similar warning to turn back to the simpler things when the prophet Micah exclaims: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Micah VI:6.*

Jesus himself taught the same lesson when one came inquiring, "Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets." *Matthew XXII:36, 40.*

James brings back the infant Church from its theorizing, in a similar practical summing up: "Pure religion, and undefiled—[αμιαντος, "not painted over, not made to appear what it is not"]—before the God and Father—[παρα τῷ θεῷ και πατρι]—is this, To visit the

fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." *James I:27.*

To recapitulate and summarize: That men shall be able to cooperate in moral and religious work, there must be some common basis of fellowship. This basis can comprehend only two possible divisions—the moral field of the life—the spiritual field of beliefs. The field of life is plain and simple, and one upon which all men agree. But the field of beliefs, or creeds, is one in which men only agree upon a few primary, or basic, points. Yet in order to accomplish the work which religion should do in the moral and spiritual uplift of the world, the active cooperation of men in large numbers is absolutely essential. *And the only basis upon which this broad cooperation of men in large numbers seems to be practicable is, the moral, upright life as just mentioned, and the comparatively narrow field of the few primary articles of religious belief upon which they all agree,* leaving all beyond this to the individual conscience. And in deciding what these primary truths may be, the following guiding principles are to be kept in view:

I. That only those articles of belief which are so plain, so simple, that honest, inquiring minds cannot differ as to their meaning and their truth, are to be held as essential. Any articles of belief which will not stand this test cannot be claimed as vital in religious faith: for, as before shown, to do so would be an injustice to both God and man.

II. That *all* religions possess a measure of Divine Truth. We are prone to look upon Judæo-Christianity

as the sole recipient and beneficiary of divine light for man, and as the sole, divinely appointed custodian of the human conscience: too apt to think that God was, and is, unknown to humanity except through Sinai and Calvary. In other words we—unconsciously it may be, yet in reality—narrow God and His laws, and His ways with man, down to the restricted ideas of our own especial type of religion, forgetting, or ignoring, that He is All-Father of all the widely scattered sons of men. We forget that Judæo-Christianity, in its double phase, is only an episode in the religious history of humanity. We forget the great seething world of antiquity in and through all the unnumbered ages before Judæism, and its offspring, Christianity, had made their appearance among the religions of the world: a world which yet had found the great moral truths, and the pathways to God. And we further forget the vast, God-seeking, and God-finding, world outside of Judæo-Christianity, which since the days of Sinai and Calvary, and even now, still makes up the great mass of mankind.

And this narrowness is not devoid of evil results. It makes us intolerant of the beliefs of other peoples: unwilling to concede that they, too, may have found light: disinclined to calmly and reasonably compare notes, and to judge dispassionately as to the respective merits of each. The fact that they are apt to make the same mistake, and pursue a like narrow course with regard to us and our faith, only adds proof of the religious narrowness which is characteristic of men, but does not make valid excuse for us. There is a verse in one of the Suras of the Koran which faces the broader truth:

"Whether a Believer—[Moslem], a Jew, a Christian, or a Sabæan, he who believeth in God, the Last Day, and acts aright, his reward is with his God: he should neither fear nor be grieved." *Sura III.*

Yet in it all there is growing up in the conscience of the world the germ of a broader spiritual faith, and a recognition of the fact that all religions are true so far as they have truth in them; and every religion false in so far as it contains error: that, after all, it is not a question of religions and their distinctive names, but of religion and Divine Truth: a recognition of the fact that our so-called heathen ancestors knew God, and that no wall of separation lifts between them and us, either here, or in the Hereafter: a faith which shall no longer do violence to tenderest instincts of the human heart.

The story is told of one of those strenuous old Norsemen that, some centuries ago, over-ran Southern Europe, who had been persuaded to accept Christianity and to receive baptism, with the assurance of heaven in store, that at the last moment he drew back with this anxious inquiry: "And where are my forefathers who died before they had heard of all this?" "Suffering the torments of Hell because of their heathenism," was the priestly reply. "Then I choose to go with my kin," was the stout-hearted declaration of the stern old warrior. It was a loyal human heart voicing protest against the manifest injustice of a creed, and blindly walking in a right pathway: for Jesus never said that.

Personally, I can meet in church fellowship anyone who is honestly trying to live the Jesus life, whatever may be his views of the Christ mystery. And more: To

me there is no dividing line to come between those who are trying to live a righteous life, by whatsoever name they may call their faith or their God. And in this I deem that I am walking in the footsteps of the Master himself: for did he not, in the spirit of a true liberality, say of the one who wrought in his name but followed not, "Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us"? *Luke IX:50.*

### *Et Ille, Frater Meus!*

A Jewish Rabbi, a man of deep learning, and much before the public, telephoned me one day, "I should like to spend an hour with you that we may compare beliefs." He came that evening. As we sat in the library, he said to me, "Tell me: What have you found?"

As I told of the dropping away of the old trammels, and the dying out in my soul of the old dogmas and creeds, and of the plain, simple trust in the All-Father of All Men which had come to me instead, he listened intently to every word. Grasping me by both hands as we stood, his whole face beaming, he said: "That is just where we stand. There is nothing between us."

"No, Brother," I replied; "there is nothing between us: we are brethren."

He is dead now. But that night, in the clasped hands I felt the great, warm, pulsating heart of Judæism. I had found my kin.

Be just to the Jew. He has suffered much. But now at last he is turning back once more to the parting

of the ways. For two thousand years the Jew has been slowly and painfully unloading Egypt and the Levite: and today, after the long ages of spiritual bondage, he is back again with Abraham, and Mamre, and the night-wind, and the stars. The world does not know him. The hard, sordid struggle of ages has rested like a pall upon him: but back of that impassive face is the soul of a dreamer, dreaming again the tent-life and the palms of that old-time Syrian land. He sits at his money-table, and looks out upon the thronged street, and the restless faces of the passers by: but his soul is not there. In his dreamy eyes lingers ever a picture of ages ago: and he dreams, and dreams, and in his soul lives that old life over again. For he cannot forget. The centuries of persecution and outlawry have ingrained the picture too deeply. And so he dreams:

### Under the Three Balls

The years have slipped away,
The long, long, waiting years:
And with them they have carried all the tide
Of men, and things, and ages. I have lived
Again the old, old days of Asian plains,
And tents, and camels, and the lowing herds,
And stood with Abram out beneath the stars.

How long?—I cannot tell.
I only know that life, some old, vague life

Of days that have been, weaves its wordless spell,
And lays upon me hands, strange, mystic hands
That hold me fast.
Again I walk the plains
Of Mamre: and the eventide
Casts shadows by the well where brown-armed girls
Come with their water jars to draw.
And then the old, old faith comes back:
That simple walk with God beneath the stars:
The evening talk, as one talks with a friend
When night-winds wander from the desert up,
And tell of myrrh, and aloes, and the scent
Of unnamed blossoms.

Is this I?—I, of the busy street,
The bustling shops, the marts, the city ways—
And that a dream?

Or is this life I seem to live a dream:
And that the real? Have I only dreamed
Of long-drawn, weary ages that are not,
Nor ever have been: and that old, old life
The life I still am living? Shall I wake
To hear the tent flap in the wandering winds
Of Mamre's plains, and walk with God once more?

And still he dreams. But the dream is no longer of The Temple, and of The Law. He is dreaming a home-sick dream of Mamre, and of the old tent-life out in the Open, and of the God of the Great Waste

Spaces, and the rude altar of stone. It is no longer "Adonai." It is the "Jehovah" of that Older Covenant come again! The ages have dropped away, and he is tenting with Abraham once more—and the night-wind, and the stars.

### *Shylock*

Shylock, and not Antonio, is the tragedy in "The Merchant of Venice." It is Abraham with the ages of outlawry and persecution upon him. And it is more. It is the racial cry of agony from the Ghetto. Yet it is still more than this—and deadlier far. It is the tragedy of humanity transformed into a wild beast and turned at bay, through the centuries of persecution and outlawry and wrong. And all for what? Because, ages ago, a misled mob took one human life in an outburst of fanatical zeal. For this alone, a whole race doomed to centuries of torture and wrong!—the Pale, the Ghetto, the pogrom, the massacre, the unspeakable outrages against virtue and innocence at the hands and the lusts of mobs of the basest type: and no law to protect! Put the record of Calvary, and the Cross, over against all this.

And Shylock!—the piteous tragedy turned into a comedy, and the Jew held up to contumely and derision, with all the skill of literary art. "Hurt?"—Listen to the torrent of words pouring like a hot lava flood from the bitterness of a tortured heart. "Hate?"—Yes! as of a lost soul in Hell. But, Oh, the pity of it: and the cause of it! . . .

"Signor Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my monies, and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug:
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You called me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gabardine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, now it appears you need my help:
Go to, then: now you come to me and say,
Shylock, we would have monies. *You* say so:
You who did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: money is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats? or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondsman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this:
"Fair Sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last:
You spurned me such a day: another time
You called me dog: and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much monies?"

And again: "He hath laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what is his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same

weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what shall his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction."

The Jew is the haunting and the accusing ghost of Christianity, as Jesus and the cross are the haunting ghosts of the Jew. But the guilt of the Christian is the greater.

### *Has God Forgotten?*

"But Zion said, Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." There was an answer: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget: yet will not I forget thee." *Isaiah XLIX: 14, 15.*

"Resist?" How can he?—he is helpless. And he bends his head to the storm—and waits. But his hands are reaching upward: and the Jehovah of that Older Covenant is still there. And He does not forget.

# XIII

## THE CONVERGING ROADS

CHRISTIANITY, as we know it today, is no longer a simple, primitive faith, such as was given by its founder; but, instead, is a slow evolution, having in it much that its founder never put there: possibly much that he never anticipated, or intended should be put there. Probably no other one thing bears such forceful testimony to the inherent vitality of the teachings of Jesus, as the fact that they have been able to survive the load of unrelated theological impedimenta with which they have been weighted down. And it has come largely from zeal, a desire to steady the ark. It is hard to learn the lesson of Uzzah; and to keep hands off in the ways of God. It is this complex faith with which we have to do in our modern life. And in regard to this growing complexity, Christianity does not stand as an anomaly among religions. Its evolution from a simple to a complex form is paralleled by other leading faiths of the world; possibly by all religious faiths. Judæism and Islam, born of the spiritually fertile soul-life of the Semitic peoples, are like cases. Sinai and Medina are far in the past. So, too, Brahmanism and Buddhism, born of the Aryan folk. It is the ever-growing power of old myths, of the Writings of the Fathers, of the increasing ecclesiasticism. It was of this in the older Judæism that Jesus said: "For laying aside

the commandments of God, ye hold to the traditions of men . . . and he said unto them, Full well—[καλως, "truly," "altogether"]—ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." *Mark VII:8, 9.*

And it was from the spiritually stifling burden of these in the Jewish Church of the Old Dispensation that the Prophets Isaiah and Micah had previously broken away. It was, likewise, against this already-manifest tendency in the nascent Christianity that Peter entered protest in that first Church Council at Jerusalem, when he said: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, that ye should put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" *Acts XV:10.*

It was to counteract this tendency that the notable Council of the Apostles and Elders, and Brethren, sent out that short, terse letter to the brethren in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. *Acts XV:23, 29.* And it was to battle with this growing drift of the Church away from the simple teachings of Jesus, that James, the brother of Jesus, and head of the Church at Jerusalem, sent out the Epistle "to the Twelve Tribes that are scattered abroad."

And yet, despite the warnings, the simple teachings of Jesus have become weighted down with the theological and ecclesiastical accretions of centuries until his Church is water-logged in the stormy seas of modern civilization. And it is the misfortune of the religious life of man, that the saying of this, and the attempt to unload the burden and to go back to the simple faith,

has ever been stigmatized as heterodox. It used to be called heresy, with the fagot and the stake for answer. For men do not always distinguish between a faith and its barnacles. The danger-point has been reached in any religion when it begins to let dogma take the place of the life as a standard of the spiritual state. Jesus evidently saw this when he said: "By their fruits ye shall know." It was his constant reproach to the Pharisees and the Doctors of the Law, that they had let dogma thus supplant the life.

That the purely doctrinal portions of creeds are steadily losing their hold upon the world, can scarcely be questioned. Nor—in view of the centuries of wrangling, and heart-burning, and persecution, to which they have given rise—can it be said to be a matter of regret. But it is equally certain that the warning mandates of that Old Law, and the great, sweet, sane moral precepts of Jesus, Ὁ Διδασκαλος, "The Teacher," are gaining a stronger hold upon men with each succeeding century.

And Christianity is still changing with the years: changing by accretions, changing by eliminations. Nor, when we note the changes, the transformations, which have come to it in the nineteen centuries of its existence, changes in creed, in church forms, in rituals, in fellowship, and in the spirit and manner of its propagation, have we reason to believe that at last the final word has been spoken, and that the future is to witness no further change. When we look back over the long centuries of creeds built up, pronounced to be correct, and final, then patched, amended, torn down and rebuilt,

what just reason have we to claim that now, at last, we have reached the real truth, that this really is final, and that the future contains within it no possibility of further modification?

Men in the past have often thought so of their own times, and their own frame-work of creeds; but the passing years have told a different tale. Rather are we forced to view Christianity as a religion still in the process of evolution. And this is healthful and normal: for this links it to all else in the line of Man's development, instead of leaving it as exceptional. Man's religions grow with himself—to the infancy of the race, the myths of the child: to the folk manhood, the deep, keen, spiritual insight, and an eye that looks past the imagery of the myth to the calm, clear face of the All-Father Himself. When man's religions do not thus grow with his growth, they drop back into the list of things that are dying. Grow, or die, seems to be the universal law of creation: and when growth ceases, death is already begun. It is the law of the crystal: it is the law of the tree: it is the law of the star: it is the law of the man physical and intellectual. Shall we stop here, and say we have reached the limit, and that it is not the law of the man spiritual in his faiths also?

It will not do to ignore these questions, or to say they should not be brought up. The great mass of thinking men have already brought them up; but in the rush and the hurry of life, having little time to seek the solution for themselves, they are quietly standing aloof from the churches, with the unspoken verdict, "Not proven," as against much that the creeds have postu-

lated. They want a reason: and they are right. I was once present in a Bible class when a man, superintendent of city schools, asked a question, upon some such point, of the teacher, who was also pastor of the church. The reply was a sneer at men who were "wise above that which is written." In this case the answer *was* written, only it was in Greek. What was needed was a Greek Testament, and the ability to use it. A moment's reference to a pocket Testament, and an explanation of the force of the Greek, settled a smouldering doubt. And yet religion is not simply a belief. This is the lowest, the most superstitious, aspect of it. In the higher, the truer, and the nobler sense, it is a life. And a God jealous for his own prerogatives, avid for his own glory, is the lowest type of a God. It is the heathen's conception of his idol. He has measured his God by himself. The higher type of God, as of man, is, One solicitous for the welfare of others. This is an altruism which links human and divine.

Paul, rather than Jesus, was the real founder of the Church which grew up in the after ages. That Jesus ever intended the building up of the elaborate ecclesiastical framework of the modern Church from the simple foundations which he laid, does not seem probable. He certainly gave no hinting of such a purpose. He tore down the elaborate structure which during the centuries had, by successive additions, been slowly built up from the simple foundation of "The Law," as given at Sinai. And even the Christianity which has grown up from the foundations which Paul laid is itself largely a further evolution: for the Greek scholasticism

of Alexandria and of the Eastern Mediterranean was still to get in its work. And then Nikaia! And Constantinople! It took three hundred years to evolute from the Unity of God to a Duality: sixty more to change from a Duality to a Trinity: then followed, at Rome, and in the West, Mariolatry, and Saints-adoration: then the upheaval and the reconstruction of the Reformation: while the variant minor creeds have ever had their evanescent day.

This book may seem like a plea for what the Church calls heterodoxy. Rather is it a plea for orthodoxy: for it is orthodoxy that is receiving the greater harm. It is the one who is narrow, not the one upon whom the narrowness finds vent, that has the greater hurt. The book is a plea for a frank facing of the facts, and a recognition of the widespread intellectual revolt against the creedal frame-work of our faith. It is a plea for the gathering of the widely variant branches of Christianity in a General Council for a comparison of views: that out of it may come a clearer understanding as to what really are the fundamentals of religion: and then a spirit of wider charity: and a broader basis of church fellowship. Not looser, but broader: full recognition of God, sin, repentance, forgiveness, the getting back to God, the life everlasting: for these are the foundation-stones of all religions: but leaving all else, the question of how God plans and executes it all, to be settled by each individual soul with God for itself—or left unsettled, with eternity to make answer. And then, this for all men, for all races, for all faiths!

And this is where the world, the great, toiling bur-

den-bearing world of humanity practically stands today. The paths are converging. It knows there is a God. It knows there is sin, and repentance, and divine forgiveness: and it looks forward to a life beyond the grave, and to a meet and just award for the deeds done in this life: and here it stops. It is Christianity going back to its beginnings again. Persecutions have in a great measure been outgrown. Proscriptions have largely ceased. The controversial sermon is rarely heard. The creed fences between denominations are breaking down. Does it mean, after all the ages, a creedless Christianity again?—or, rather, a Christianity accepting the common human brotherhood of all religions—no Jew, no Gentile, no Heathen—with the creed practically relegated to the private conscience of each individual; and the great moral law, and the foundation-stones common to all religions, as the sole test of church brotherhood? It would seem so: and in view of the unsatisfactory past, it might well be hoped so.

For humanity is at last beginning to grasp the higher truth that there is after all only One Faith, One God, One Common Brotherhood of All Men, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free: and that our different religions are only the different racial ways of looking at Him, the kindly All-Father of all the children of men. Peter learned, to his surprise, this lesson the day he went, under divine direction, to Cornelius, that devout heathen centurion of Rome, one "who feareth God." As he listened to the soul-experience of Cornelius the whole spiritual horizon broadened out: "Then Peter opened his mouth and said, Of a truth I perceive that

God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation—[εν παντι εθνει, "race," "people"]—he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." *Acts X: 34, 35.*

It was the lesson the Master taught. *Luke IX:49, 50.*

Possibly the one thing which, more than any other, has saved Christianity from becoming a mere mental abstraction, has been the healthful indifference of the mass of humanity to theologies and creeds. With a great saving commonsense, it has turned away from the built-up Christ of the Councils, to the Jesus of the simple parables, and of the old-time Galilean Plains. It sought bread: it found a stone. Hungering, and unsatisfied, it has gone back to the "Bread of Life." "Irreligion?" No! This *is* religion.

The mystery of a non-explainable, and non-understandable, creed, one which violates and contravenes the very basic laws of logical consistency, is a weakness, not a strength, to Christianity. This places it at a disadvantage in the contest with the simple monotheism of Judæism and Islam, those other great Abrahamic religions of the world. And it is a heavy handicap which the moral teachings of Christianity have to carry in their attempts at the evangelization of Moslem lands, and, indeed, of all lands.

But, after all, a broader conception of God Himself is coming to humanity. To man in the infancy of the race, his God is only a local divinity, God of his especial land and folk, and known only by His local name. To the early Hebrew He was Jehovah: to the Hindu, Brahm: to the old Greek, Theos: to the Latin, Deus:

to the Arab of the desert lands, Allah: to the simple-minded Indian of the forest, The Great Spirit: to our own Northland ancestors by the shores of the winter seas, All-Fader, kindliest name of all. Each at the first saw, with the narrow vision of race prepossession, only a God of their own land and of their own folk. But as the centuries have gone by, the broader thought of one common All-Father for all men, and for all lands and peoples, has begun to dawn upon the human mind. Race lines are dropping aside. It is not that God has changed. It is only that man is growing up to a fuller conception of his God. It is humanity at last learning the lesson that all religions at root are One: and that He is God of All.

*Let us help God by tearing down the fences which human narrowness has built.*

### Brother

Why should we mingle in strife?
Why should we hate or quarrel?
Why should the ways be parted
And the pathways trodden asunder?
The end is the same for all.

One may be weak by the way:
And one may be faint for the battle:
And one may be feeble and halted:
And one may fall by the wayside:
But the pathways lead ever the same.

And one is the heaven before us:
And one is the kindly All-Father:
And one are the heart-beats that seek Him:
And one is the love for His children:
And one is the Face they look to,
The Face of the God of all.

We may call Him Allah, or Buddh:
We may call Him Zeus, or Theos:
We may call Him Gott, or Dios:
Or Jehovah, or Lord, or Deus:
Or only the Red man's Great Spirit:
Or the heart lift to One that is nameless:
But He— He is God of all.

And what is the measure of Him?
He is big as the eyes that see Him:
He is big as the mind that seeks Him:
He is big as the soul that knows Him:
Not God, but man, must grow.

### *Our Dead*

Before man is a boundless ocean. He calls it Eternity. He knows this life: what lies beyond, he does not know. Even of a life beyond, he does not know. He believes: but he cannot prove. Why does he believe? Because of an instinct within, which he calls faith. All men have it: and its universality among mankind is accepted as presumptive evidence of the reality of that which is so generally held to be real. It is one of the more occult phases of the human soul which we have

not yet sufficiently gaged. Maybe in this life we shall never be able to gage it. Maybe for the earthly life this is the limit of the knowable. Yet it is upon this faith that religions are built. It is common to all. No religion can legitimately claim to be sole possessor of the hope which is founded thereon: yet many do so claim: the narrower the intelligence, the more insistent and intolerant is apt to be that claim. This is one of the mental weaknesses of humanity. Yet with this veil over the Hereafter, man is not content; chafes under the restraint. Ever his hungry soul seeks to pierce into the beyond. He gives his dead to eternity; but his heart cries out. He cannot rest. He goes on. Years come, and fade away; but what of those we call dead, who were part of our lives? Did they stop? Or do they, too, still go on—only we cannot see? Our dead! Our dead! It has been the pain and the problem of the ages.

HERTZ KRANK

O God, these loves, these earthly loves of ours,
How they compel us! How they grip us fast
With tentacles as steel! How close they hold,
And sway and bend us! How they will not loose!
And how the old ties bind us to that heart-lived past
That seems the one thing real! How we live
Those old days over, and cannot forget:
Nor would we, if we could: the days are sweet,
Even when gone; as some fair day in June
Of years that have been, years that come not back,
But ever haunt, and will haunt till we die.

And then that other life! Dear Lord, shall we
Find them again? And shall no stranger hand
Come in between to mar the old, old loves?
And shall we have them? Shall that future be
E'en as the past, that old, sweet past of earth,
And earthly loves, and earthly hand-clasps close,
And eyes that look into fond, answering eyes,
And voice that trembles, with love's fullness bent?

Dear Lord, forgive! but e'en before Thy Throne
Needs must we weep, if that we stand alone.

It is the hungry cry of the human heart in all ages, and with all kin. Importunate hands are ever beating against the silent sky. Tear-bedewed graves bear mute witness to the heart agony.

### *Has An Answer Come?*

Yes—and No! Logical proof there is none: and with the limitations of the flesh, no answer would seem to be possible. There is a broken arch in the bridge to the Hereafter. Yet while the reality of the after life is something which no man can prove, humanity accepts and believes. The only valid proof would be the return of someone from the Beyond: and of this, we have no well-authenticated and generally accredited instance. They are with us: they are gone. The veil is drawn between. Even the resurrection from the tomb of Gethsemane only has the support of an account written long after, and based largely upon hearsay, and

this of *ex parte* testimony: and all this subject again, for eight centuries, to the successive mutilation, and recopying, and destruction of perishable manuscripts. This is not said irreverently, but only as a matter of historic fact. Religion gains nothing by ignoring or denying the facts in the case. A religion which cannot endure the tests of research and of man's reason is only superstition.

Yet we believe. And the sorrow-stricken, hungry-hearted world of the bereaved, standing at the mouth of the open tomb, believes: believes, with a faith that will not admit of doubt, that it is to have its dead again. Why does it believe? Not because of logic: for logic has here no standing. It is faith: and faith stands fast. And yet it is not blind faith. Back of the faith are promptings more subtle, possibly in the end more satisfying, than historic claims. Three such may be cited:

I. That instinct of which I have before spoken, and which seems to be implanted in every human soul. It is one of the unexplainable spiritual reachings out into the void, which yet somehow seems to touch upon the intangible. It was this that came to the man primeval in his untaught gropings into the dark. His burial mounds have told the tale. It was of this that Socrates discoursed so calmly, so undoubtingly, when facing the death sentence before his judges. Yet there was sadness in it: for to the Greek mind it was ἀ-ιδης, "The not-seen," of a vague, dreamy underworld, where the shades of the dead wandered aimlessly, mourning the brave old days upon earth, with the blue waters and

the crisp breezes of the Ægean, and the sloping, sun-lit plains of asphodel.

We have here come to an ultimate fact in man's soul-life. It is not reason: yet the world accepts, and believes. I have called it instinct. But what is instinct? Is it only, after all, a higher, finer, more elusive kind of reason wherein we fail as yet to discern the connecting links of a more subtile logical chain? Is the instinct of humanity only the logic of another world, the consecutive steps of which we, with our earthly limitations, as yet fail to grasp?

II. The clear-sighted, spiritual vision of highly gifted souls who somehow have seemed to pierce beyond the veil which we call death: and who by their strong trust have lighted the way for others of weaker faith. Of such was Jesus of Nazareth: and the world of the bereaved has looked through his eyes and found comfort at the mouth of the open tomb. And somehow out of the inspiration of that life, somehow out of the strong, vivent faith of one who seemed to be in closer touch with the unseen than other men, and out of his words and cheer, has come to humanity a better hope. It is the uplifting help of a strong heart and a steadfast soul. It was man at his best. And the world, the sorrow-stricken world, takes hold, and is glad.

III. The reflected light in the eyes of the dying: as one looks into another room in the angle of the mirror. I have seen it, in the long years as physician, by the bedside of those who lingered for a moment on the border-line of the Hereafter. My Mother's eyes were so—and my Wife's. And so the hungry heart of

the world takes comfort in its giving, and gives up. Et Ego?—

RESURGAM!

The glancing sunlight of the closing day
Glints on the waters to the ocean's rim,
Making a golden pathway: and beyond,
In the warm after-glow, I faintly see,
Or seem to see, an evening prophecy
Of coming dawn, and of the glad, new day.

### *In Eternity Now*

Man is not as one who stands on the shore and looks out before him upon a boundless sea. Time is not a shore-line: it is only a standing-place in the midst of a sea that stretches out, behind, before, without limit or bound. We do not look forward to eternity. Death is not the entering in. We are in eternity now. Before, behind, we cannot see. Life is ever one eternal NOW. And Eternity is one eternal NOW.

Astronomers speak of a Great Central Sun: that, in a Universe where all seems to be drifting, there is yet order and plan. We know our own solar system, and its central sun about which we drift. It is cosmos —but only our cosmos. Yet we are not fixed: and this is not all. Beyond is a still greater cosmos, of which we are a part. Our solar system is drifting, drifting, age after age, toward the constellation Hercules. Yet it, too, is drifting. But whither? Somewhere in expanse is there a Great Central Sun?—or are all only drifting about some central point in space, mutually counter-

balancing each other like binary stars: and if so, what is that point? Is that where God dwells? and light, and heat, and power, and life? And about this are all swinging in orbits so vast that we can only wonder? Every pathless comet that whirls by us, not to return, has yet an orbit. Somewhere in space is a central point that holds it in leash. That runaway star, 1830 Groombridge, with a velocity and a course which are apparently without law, has an orbit. We speak of the finite. Is there any finite? Is it not all infinite? Only, we are too weak to see. To the finite mind it is *Saecula Saeculorum,* αιῶνες αιῶνων, *ages of ages,* the measuring-rod of the finite. To the infinite mind, it is Eternity: and there is no measuring-rod. And we?—*We are in Eternity now!*

# XIV

## THE MAN SPIRITUAL

[This section is a reprint from the book, RACE LIFE OF THE ARYAN PEOPLES, published in 1907]

THE man intellectual of the twentieth century is not the man intellectual of the first century; much less is he the man in intellect of the Proto-Aryan days of four thousand years ago. He stands upon a different intellectual plane. We say he has grown: and we do not go beyond the fact in the statement. We call it evolution—the evolution of the man from the child. The history of civilization shows this to be the law of being of the man intellectual. In science, in literature, in art, in philosophy, in mechanics, in civic institutions, in all that goes to make up the life of the man intellectual, we have seen him, as the ages have gone by, steadily climbing up to higher and better things, to a clearer insight, a broader knowledge, a kindlier civilization. Is the man spiritual to be held as an exception to this law of evolution? or is the law general and not partial in its working? Yet we tacitly admit that the law has been general and not special in its scope in the past; and that man has passed through a stage of spiritual evolution. The Hymns to the Maruts are different from the Epistles. With all their fresh oneness with nature, they are still the nursery songs of the child as compared with the soul travail and the soul triumphs

of Paul, or of Augustine, or Luther, or Jonathan Edwards, or Wesley. Yet when men talk of a further evolution of man, timid souls and conservative theologies draw back and cry—"The man intellectual? Yes! Who can measure the possibilities that lie before him? But the man spiritual?—Let us hold fast to the 'Writings of the Fathers,' and walk only in the old ways, lest we stumble and go astray. There is nothing more to learn. The past reached the summit of possible spiritual knowledge."

Is man then to look forward intellectually, but ever to walk with eyes turned backward in spiritual things? Has God in all else started His works from the rudiments—in the making of worlds, the fiery vapor, the gyration of the nebulous mass, the planets flung off to whirl about the common center, the slowly cooling globes, the successive telluric ages, vapor, water, land, reptile, mammal, man to be lord and master of all?—has He given to man himself only the germs of his possibilities upon earth in mechanics, in science, in art, in government, and then bidden him go on? Has God thus far done all this, and then in spiritual matters has He had to reverse the law? This is not the history of man spiritually thus far upon earth.

Thus far in the history of the human race there is a clear record of an evolution spiritual which has kept pace with the evolution intellectual. Why then are we wont to suppose that the one law has exhausted itself, and the other has not? That the man intellectual is to go on; the man spiritual to stop? Why shall we no longer look backward to Archimedes, and Lykur-

gos, and Aristotle, yet ever walk with eyes fixed backward upon Nikaia, and Augustine, and the creed-makers, nor dare to think or look for ourselves in matters spiritual? And is this looking ever to the past in questions of faith best honoring God?—or are men best to honor Him, the God who made man in His own image, by looking onward and upward in the path spiritual also? The trained eye, the awakened mind, are ever discerning new things in the world about them. Shall the awakened soul alone of all God's creations remain without the ability to perceive new truths, and ever look only to the dead past as the summit of all spiritual perfection? It would be an exception to the law, that basic law of creation, evolution and growth, which prevails everywhere else in the cognizable universe. And right here lies the great differentiating line between Rome and the essential life of Protestantism. The one looks backward: the other purports at least to look forward. For Rome with her *Semper Idem* is the medieval past. But, as said before, Rome dies hard —even in Protestantism.

What are the possibilities which lie before man in his spiritual evolution? And again we may only ask questions; for it is of the future, and of possibilities: and the Seer's vision is not always given to men.

This much at least would seem to be clear. We cannot spiritually go back; not to the days of the Hymns to the Maruts; not to Woden and Valhalla; not to the Rome of Gregory and Hildebrand, any more than to the Rome of Numa or the Caesars; not even to the days of the Puritan. Whatever the creed-bound may say,

the God we know this twentieth century A.D. is a greater God than the God our forefathers knew. Not that He has grown; but that we have grown. With the broader intellectual range, with the more matured race-mind, we can comprehend God better. And is it unreasonable to suppose that the man of the thirtieth century likewise shall say, as he looks with the yet keener mental vision of eyes that are open where we still are blind, shall not he also be able to say, "Surely the God I know is still greater"?

Shall the future hold in it for man more of a conception of the laws of God as general, eternal, immutable? more of God himself as unchanging? and that the God of Law, of broad, far-seeing, far-reaching, unchanging, General Law, is a grander God than the God of special interposition and of expediency?—for these mean failure of the Law, and thwarting of the Law-maker. Will there be less of that old Hebrew idea of God as an Oriental Monarch, jealous for his own glory, intent upon his own honor? less of the figurative child-speech of man's spiritual infancy as found in the books of the Old Covenant? more of the conception of God as the maker of a law of life, and who would not that any should die; and man's sin not so much a personal slight toward God as rather a deadly wrong done against his own soul? Will there be more of a realization of the fact that, in the deep mystery of the existence of evil under the rule of an omniscient and omnipotent God, man's theological plummet has not reached bottom? that the problem of evil is something older, broader, deeper, more far-reaching than

man, and this world, and an allegorical Eden? that it holds within its scope a universe and all created beings? and that evil is the essential and inevitable corollative antithesis of good, as up is of down, or as here is of there, or as darkness is of light; the one in its very nature logically implying the possibility of the other; and that this is Law? and that in the very nature of things this must have been so from the beginning, and will be so to the end; and that the existence of evil as an entity is the logical possibility which must ever lie back of a law of right when coupled with freedom of will in a subject being? else must law and freedom of will be self-contradictory and mutually self-destructive. Will there be a growing perception of the fact that Adam and Eve are to be found in the soul of every new-born babe? and that Eden with all its undeveloped possibilities of good and evil exists anew in each child-life, and is lived over again in every human soul?

And in all this will there be more of a readiness in matters theological to say, "I do not know"; as ready to say "Nescio" as to say "Credo"? And in matters of faith will there be a clearer distinction drawn between the merely incomprehensible, and the incredible because impossible? Theology has not always hewn sharply enough to the line in these things. Will there be also a keener perception of the essential unity, and the unbroken continuity of the life here and the life hereafter? more of the thought of bodily death as only the nightly rest of a wayfarer who is but part way upon his journey; and that with the morning he arises and goes on his way refreshed—but still it is on—and still

it is the same way? and in all this, more of a willingness to keep "hands off" in God's dealings with other men's souls; and a better understanding that the supreme duty of each one is to make sure that his own soul is right with God? And in all this will man also learn more clearly the lesson that it is not so much a question of religions or of creeds, but of the truth or the error which may be in them; false in so far as they have error? Will there be less of the idea that God has some especial name or creed by which alone He may be approached; but that He is the same to all men whether they call upon Him as Theos, or Deus, or Dieu, or Allah, or Gott, or only as the Great Spirit of the wild Indian; just as the sun is the same, and pours out its kindly light alike upon all lands and nations by whatsoever name it may be known and called among the widely scattered and diversified children of men? The Ἥλιος, *Helios,* of that old Greek shone as genially down upon the wave-kissed shores of Argolis and upon the island-dotted Ægean twenty-five centuries ago as it does today upon the blue waters and the poppied plains of California del Sur. Only, to the Greek it was Ἥλιος; to us, The Sun.

Are we to put away somewhat of the spiritual egotism which would reject all light that is not of our especial finding, and admit that we may possibly learn as well as teach spiritual truth among those we are wont to call heathen? Shall we see more clearly that Sokrates had light, that Marcus Aurelius had light, and that the world is better because of their lives and

their teachings? that they, too, builded stepping-stones on the way upward? and that they, and the light they taught, are to be judged, not by their degenerate types any more than Christianity is to be judged by its degenerate types; and that, in this, Christianity is in no position to throw stones? Will there be a better conception of the fact that God has many ways of revealing Himself to men, and that in an exclusive faith in what we have been wont to call revealed truth we may possibly have blinded ourselves to what other men may have received of revelation in other ways—that Inner Voice Sokrates speaks of so calmly when awaiting the death sentence from his judges—the light by which Marcus Aurelius walked through the long years of a just life—the light which Confucius had, and which has made the home-life of China sweet for untold centuries—the light which Gautama held forth in the teachings of "The Noble Way"? Will there be more of a recognition of the fact that every sincere heart that lifts itself in desire to God in the light it has is finding God, and is heard of God?

Will there be more of the self-respecting manhood of one made in the divine image; less of that old monkish idea of an utter and unworthy self-abasement which dishonors God in dishonoring His handiwork? And with this will there be more of the idea that man has his part to do, as well as God: that there is a price upon salvation from sin which man must pay? less of the ignoble thought that the ideal Christian is a spiritual

pauper who most honors God and free grace by doing nothing, and deserving nothing in himself?

Will there be a growing conception of the fact that the highest type of religion must take in the man intellectual as well as the man spiritual; and that the religion which can look upon ignorance as the mother of devotion fails utterly of an adequate conception of the broadness of the man God planned when He said, "Let us make man in our own image"? Will there be an increasing conception of heaven and hell as essentially conditions; and that man makes his own heaven and hell? that where sin is, unrepented of, there is hell though it were at the foot of the Great White Throne itself, even as Satan could "present himself with the Sons of God," and yet be Satan still, and all hell burning within him? and that where innocence is, there is heaven, even though in the darkest depths of starless space?

Will there be a freer hand in brushing away the myths of the past? a clearer vision in the unfolding of allegory? a keener insight for the task of reading out of the undeveloped verbiage of the infancy of speech, in its first rude attempts to express spiritual thought, the errors which were inevitable? For these things were the rough, woody husk about that modicum of divine truth which primitive man was prepared to grasp, and were born of the crudeness of his spiritual capacity in the days of the childhood of the race. They were to the soul of man in his spiritual infancy as the picture-books and the painted blocks of the kindergarten.

*Foregropings*

Has not this whole theological outlook been from a mistaken standpoint? If the fathers knew not more, but less, of science, of philosophy, of God's universe about them, and of God's way with man through the centuries, and less even of the history and the tongues of the sacred books upon which their faith was based, than do the children, why, with this lesser light, should they be supposed to have a deeper insight into the spiritual truths which pertain to man's soul? And if they saw less clearly, why should the present and the future tie themselves helplessly to the creeds which these men builded? Is man in spiritual things alone to deny himself the liberty of thinking for himself? Is not the man of the present as competent to frame a creed—indeed, is he not more competent—than any Council of Nikaia, or of Augsburg, or of Westminster, or Calvin, or John Knox, or John Wesley? And when the Council of Constantinople decreed that the formal creed of the three hundred and eighteen bishops as adopted at Nikaia "shall not be made void, but shall remain forever," did they wisely forecast the future? If the man of the twentieth century is not fitted to frame a creed for himself and for his generation, but must turn back to the man of the past to do this work for him, he has failed in his spiritual evolution to keep pace with the evolution of his intellectual powers, and has reversed the law which holds good in all else.

Man's spiritual pathway in the past is strewn with the discarded wrecks of his outgrown creeds. Is the future to be different? Men have been thinking so for

all these ages, each new age deeming that at last it had found the end of spiritual truth, and that now its newly framed creed would abide. And the next age looks back; and, lo, again the wreckage by the wayside! Who shall say that the end is now at last reached? If we dare not say it in science, if we dare not say it in the intellectual field, dare we say it in things spiritual? Who can say it in the face of the unpreachable, not to say the unspeakable, articles which even yet find lodgment in some of the creeds?

And a creed—what is it? It is *Credo, I Believe.* Have we ever yet fully grasped the truth that the highest spiritual duty of man is to be honest with his own soul? and that the creed which the lips profess, but which the heart rejects, is nothing? worse, that it is the death of a true spirituality? for it is the way of untruth.

And will there come a clearer recognition of the fact that man's whole future cannot be fixed by his mere mental assent to dogmas of belief where, through insufficiency of data, or limited capacity of judging, an intelligent opinion is as yet to him an impossibility; and that such a state of things, if it could exist, would be a violation of that fairness and justice which must lie back of eternal law, unless that law be only a mockery? And will there come a better appreciation of the fact that blind assent to an unbelievable dogma is not honoring God—rather that it is dishonoring Him by thus debasing His handiwork, the man intellectual; and that there can be no such thing as blind faith? that this is only superstition, and on a par with the Voodooism of the African? I have heard from the pulpit this

urgent advice, "Say you believe it: and stick to it. Be obstinately believing!" It is spiritual death to the soul.

And the other man's Credo? Has the world yet learned the lesson that religion is purely an individual matter, which pertains, not to state, indeed not to church, nor to neighbor, but lies only between each soul and its God? Of some of its observances at least, Paul had caught this truth when he said, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

Will there not also come a growing sense of the impossibility of leading the lower types of man at once to an appreciation of the higher types of spiritual truth? a recognition of the fact that they, even as the Israelites of old, fresh from the idolatries of Egypt, must have some visible evidence of their God—the elaborate ceremonial, the pillar of cloud and of fire—and with this will there also be a recognition of that other fact, that these religions are not necessarily in themselves evil; only incomplete; having in them light, even if only as the flickering rush-light of man's infant civilization? And will men learn to recognize and to acknowledge the spiritual brotherhood of the higher and lower types; and will they be more ready to say "Brother" spiritually to the heathen, remembering that we once stood where the heathen now stands, and realizing that it is the man that is dwarfed, and that the man must grow before his conception of God can grow, and that in this thought the forces of civilization are indirect spiritual forces?

And in all these possibilities will the man of the future learn to be more just toward God; less prone to

pose as spokesman where God has not spoken? Will there be a juster conception of God as the pitying and cherishing All-Father of all men? less of that pitiable human narrowness which would look to Him as the God especially of my particular church and of my creed? Will there come a broader, sweeter, kindlier charity for those who may not see as I do; and a willingness to admit that they may be as honest in their opinions as I in mine; and that after all they may possibly be right, and I wrong; and that God has not delegated to me the authority to be judge? Will men and churches, in a wiser humility, learn, as said, to keep "hands off" with other men's souls?

It has been a long, weary road that the world has traveled spiritually, a road of centuries of theological hatreds, and persecutions of earth-made creeds, and the unholy ambition to dominate other men's souls. And the end is not yet; only it seems nearer; the end which the old Seer pictured to Israel that day when, looking into the heart of the Almighty, he said: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" *Micah VI:8.*

Yet with all these many possibilities, scientific, intellectual, and spiritual, opening up before the human mind, there is still to it, as it exists here upon earth, a limit to the knowable, a limit fixed, impassable. In his grasp of physical facts man stands midway between the ultimate star and the ultimate atom; and each is equally remote, and equally unapproachable. To the

finite mind all things are only relative, strictly speaking. For it there is no fixed, no ultimate; only approximations. In the intellectual limitations of his narrow world man is to the universe about him only as the tiny insect which floats upon the drifting kelp in the great eddy of the Sargasso Sea. It rests upon the little foothold which to it is home, while above, below, and all about it, are only the abyss, and the void, and the onreaching waste, unmeasured, uncomprehended, inconceivable.

And in fact, we are learning that all human knowledge is not ultimate, only comparative; for we have no fixed starting-points. Is it the establishing of a point in space?—but the basic points of our measurement are drifting. Is it the defining of an era in time?—but who shall fix the basic place of time in eternity? Is it the determining of direction in space?—but which is up, and which is down? Is it a definition of the One Great Central Life-Force of all?—He has only said, "I AM." Is it the spiritual resting-place of a creed?—the centuries are only one long line of dragged anchors and wreckage.

What is the meaning of it all? Simply that the finite mind reaches its limit when it touches upon the infinite. In science, in intellectual reaching-out, in spiritual aspirations, always the point where the mind stops baffled in its quest, and can only say, "May be!" and so turns back upon itself helpless. Before it is the wall; and however the wall may seem at times to recede, still it is there; and still it is a wall, gateless, impassable.

And the lesson of it all? Not despair; but a clearer appreciation of the fact that to man as he is here upon earth, there is an insuperable, and presumably intentional, limit to the knowable. But the limit is wide enough for the years. And the future, when the years shall have broadened out into the eternities?—He can only wait. For the end is not yet.

And maybe there is after all to be a gateway to the wall. And maybe the rift men call death is the entering in; and the finite shall come into touch with the infinite; and at last we shall know.

WAIT!

I asked my soul of the things beyond:
The things unseen of that life to be;
And of the end.
My eyes are hungering to see:
I cannot wait.

My soul asked God.
But no reply
Came from the hushed eternity.
Only an echo floated back
Across the ways of the untrod track:
An echo—*"Wait!"*

# XV

## EVENING

NINETY years!—Evening: but not yet twilight. "But it shall come to pass that at the evening time it shall be light." *Zechariah XIV:7.* Let me again speak a personal word. There came a time in my own soul-life when I awoke to the fact that a great spiritual change was taking place within me. I had not read books of skepticism or of doubt. Even of the so-called Higher Criticism I had seen only the stray snatches that have appeared in the public press. My life has been too busy: and then, I did not want other men's opinions. I wished to examine, and to know, for myself. As in the book, "Race Life of the Aryan Peoples," my desire was to go back to the original sources for the facts, and then to draw my own conclusions. And these conclusions, whether right or wrong, I must answer for alone. I do not judge other men who may have reached different conclusions. I have no moral right to do so. And I have no right to assume that they are wrong, and that I alone have found the truth. I can only speak for myself, and of what has come to me.

As the years went by, I found that many phases of the older beliefs were dropping away. I had not consciously sought to disprove them. I had not knowingly questioned them. But they had failed to satisfy my spiritual needs, and had simply dropped away. Or bet-

ter, maybe, as I sought for truth—honestly, carefully, painstakingly, conscientiously sought for truth—I seemed to have grown away from them. They no longer seemed to me to be well based. And they had not brought me nearer to God. On the contrary, they had come between my soul and God. I wanted free spiritual breath. In the midst of the bewildering tangle of dogmas there came into my soul the cry of that man of ages ago, "O that I might find Him!"—not a substitute: not an agent: but Him whose face had been obscured by all the centuries of controversial creed-building, and by the scaffolding of ecclesiastical and ritualistic frameworks: not simply the God of the Christian, or of the Hebrew, or of Islam; but the God as well of the buried peoples of the long-dead civilizations of forgotten centuries: Him of whom our own forefathers sang in the "Hymns to the Maruts" upon the Highlands of Farther Asia, ages ago: Him of whose face the wandering Arab has glimpses as he kneels in the burning noon-day upon the drifting sands of the desert, with his age-long pathetic cry, "Allah il Allah": Him of the wild Indian under his forest trees: Him of whom all men have visions, but the fullness of whose being no man has yet grasped:—Him, the one kindly All-Father of all the scattered children of men. And not simply the God of one small planet, but God of the millions of worlds about us: and not the God of special laws, and of miraculous interventions, but the God of broad general law—law broad enough, and wise enough, to work to its intended end without need of special courts of error.

This I know, that to me many phases of the older beliefs and dogmas are gone, and I could not, if I would, bring them back. They are gone. And in so far as I can read my own soul, I feel that I am honest in the change that has come to me: and I shall gladly stand before God to know.

At first I watched this change in myself curiously, with a feeling of wonder, of misgiving even: wonder as of one entering upon new and untrod pathways: misgiving as to the effect upon my own spiritual life. But as the years went by, the feeling of concern steadily grew less: for I found that instead of unsettling my deeper religious convictions, it only strengthened them. As the inconsistencies and conflicts of the older teachings were put aside, the doubts and the misgivings went with them. I began to see a clear, logical spiritual law running through the whole scheme of God's dealings with men. I found order and system where had seemed to be only confusion, and special intervention: and with this change of view-point, my faith began to clarify. The spiritual doubts, which before had harassed me, were dying out. I was no longer always upon the defensive over dogmas which my reason would not, because it could not, accept: no longer apologizing for manifest wrongs, and injustices, and atrocities, which my human sense of equity and mercy could not condone. A dividing line between the human and the divine began to define itself in the Scripture Record: and the touch-stone was this—Is this consistent with the divine character? If not, it cannot be of God.

As the inconsistencies, and the abstractions, and the

mysticisms of the older creeds dropped away, I saw law where before seemed chance, order where before was confusion. God broadened out to my vision: and therewith came a broader conception of the divine nature as a God of far-reaching, general law that changes not, instead of a God of thwarted plans and of consequent necessitated special interpositions: a God so omnipotent, so omniscient, so prescient, that the miracle of intervention could have neither occasion nor need. I seemed to enter upon a new and richer spiritual experience, and to be walking in a clearer light. Conscience seems to be more tender, more exacting: the desire to be right with God and man, stronger: the longing for truth, more earnest: and the other life more of an ever-present reality. And with this there came to me a keener sense of accountability to God for every act, every word, every thought, for I realized as never before that I must answer to God for myself, and alone.

And withal a deeper, more satisfying peace seemed to fill my soul. Faith had grown stronger, not weaker. And the faith and the peace abide. I seem to have taken hold upon things that endure. The eternal verities are become to me, as never before, eternal realities. Religion has passed out of the realm of the unexplainable, that which reason could not accept, and has become plain, simple, believable; and withal satisfying to both the intellectual and the spiritual sides of my being.

And somehow the lesser things seem to be dropping away as I stand in the presence of these broader laws of the spiritual world. It seems to me I have learned to

know God better: for the old clouds of doubt and misgivings which had always come between my soul and Him, the All-Father, are gone. It is as one walking in the light of a glad, new day. And the change—growth, if I may so call it—has brought, not unrest, but spiritual rest and peace. I feel that I am walking with God as never before. A great gladness comes into my heart which before was unknown. My feet seem at last to rest upon foundation-stones. It is peace: and I feel that it is the Peace of God.

*Etiam Domine: Credo!*

### *A Prophecy*

I have spoken of this book as a soul-history: and so it is—a history of my own soul. But it is more. It may seem like an indirect plea for what theologically has been called heterodoxy. Yet rather is it a plea for orthodoxy. Not for the orthodoxy of any one of the many diversified creeds which split up humanity into wrangling and warring sects, but rather for an orthodoxy of the fundamentals of all religions: something upon which not certain groups of men may stand to battle with each other, but something upon which all men may stand and together reach up to God. And it is not simply a plea for Christian unity. It is more—a plea for a living and working unity of all faiths, of all men, of all peoples, for a better upbuilding of humanity and a broader brotherhood of man. The book is a frank facing of the law that man's religions must grow with his growth—or die. And it is a recognition

of the pregnant fact of the widespread intellectual revolt of thinking minds against the creedal frame-work of our faiths. For the world is repeating the past, and is again growing beyond, and away from, its creeds. It has done so before. It is doing so again. The book is a plea for the getting together of the widely variant branches of all religions for a conference of views, that out of it may come a clearer understanding of what really are the fundamentals of religion: and then a broader spirit of charity for all the varied faiths of mankind, and a wider basis for faith fellowships. It is a plea that Christianity may step out from the narrower field, and with extended hand may say to all faiths of all peoples, *We Be Brethren!* For Christianity, with its strongly entrenched position in the wealth and power of the world, should lead out, and should be the unifier of all the diversified, and too often antagonistic, faiths of humanity.

Does it seem only a baseless vision? Yet it will come! . . .

## Dreams

Sometimes a vision comes to me, a dream
Such as men dream when walking on their feet,
Yet seeing, hearing not:

Once more I walk
In Salem's streets. A temple vast uprears
Its columned porticos. Its walls reach down
To Zion's rock foundations: and the dome
Clean-cut against the skies of Syria stands.
And through its gates a countless multitude
Is entering in. From all the lands they come,
Gentile and Jew. The ghetto sends its throngs,
But now no longer cowed, and base with fear;
The scattered synagogues; the wanderers
Of Israel's blood: and by their side the kin
From desert lands, where Ishmael tents afar:
And men from Christian lands, where
Cross-decked fanes
Send out their streams: and from the far-off isles
Where purple seas break on the coral strand:
And lands unknown, beyond the unknown seas.
And from the throng I hear a murmured speech
Of God—Jehovah—Allah—Brahm—and Buddh—
As sound of many waters.

But within
Upon that lofty dome one name is writ,
Only one name: and in a mighty joy
All men bow down, and all lips voice that name,
"All-Father"—for all men at last have found,

Whate'er the name the world has known Him by,
He yet is One—one God alike to all:
All men His children: and on earth at last,
This weary, sin-cursed earth of wrangling creeds,
All-Father's Love, and Brotherhood of Man.

. . . . . .

It is the broader vision. That old ban
Of Jew and Gentile hate here fades away,
And all are brethren. And above them all,
Gentile and Jew, and men of every kin,
Only the kindly face, the pitying smile
Of Him, All-Father: and the loving Voice
Saying, "My children—mine—my children all!"

. . . . . .

Is it a dream, only a glad, sweet dream?
Or may it be?—and one God over all.

*—A reprint from "Ahasuerus—A Race Tragedy," by the Author.*

## Taps

*I am Glad*

For the Autumn leaves that rustled and fell,
  Strewing the ground with crimson and gold:
And the Autumn haze, with its dreamy spell
  When the closing year was growing old:

For the piping quail in the russet corn:
  For the caw of the crows in the maple trees:
And the Summer come again new-born,
  Before the chill of the winter breeze:

For the harvest reaped: and the garnered grain:
  And the Autumn fruit in the apple bin:
And the year's work done: and rest again
  By the evening fires the home within.

. . . . . .

Tired, maybe: a little tired
  With long, long years, and the toil: but, oh,
The work is done: and the skies are fired
  With the crimson hues of the after-glow.

I lay me down in peace to sleep.
  All was not ill, all was not good,
Of the work I did: we sow and reap.
  Maybe I did the best Icould:
*And I am Glad.*

SHALOM!

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